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**MOUNT ROYAL  
POPULAR TALES:**

**A SERIES**

**OF**

**INTERESTING AND AMUSING STORIES.**

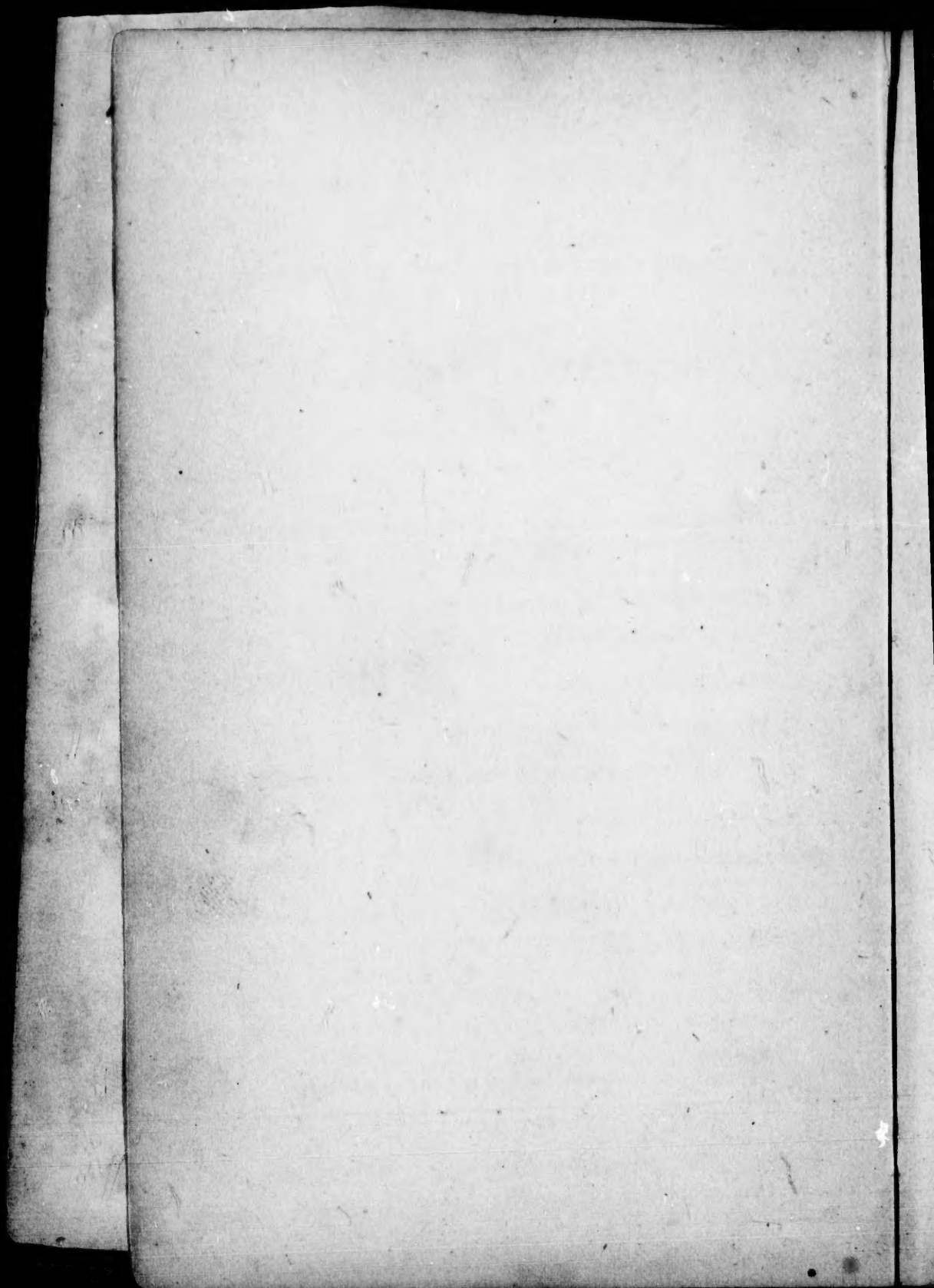
**BY**

**EMINENT AUTHORS.**

**MONTREAL:**

**PUBLISHED BY W. B. CORDIER & CO.**

**1866.**



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## Gerald Symer's Lobes.

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" 'Tis good to be off with the old love  
Before you be on with the new."

EVERY one has something to say of himself. The veteran grows young, as he recounts the exploits of his youth, and shows how fields and reputation were lost and won. The citizen has his old-world story, which he loves to tell, and who is there so hard-hearted as would wish to interrupt him? I, too, have my story, and, to relieve the tedium of a sick-bed, I have become an egotist, and, such as it is, have resolved to relate it. If I can be a hero nowhere else, I shall at least be the hero of my own little tale.

Of my early youth I shall say little. I had a father who looked strictly after me, and a mother who loved me, but who died before I could appreciate her tenderness. As I was the only child, I was allowed, on all hands, to be a prodigy of learning, steadiness, and so forth; but the truth is, the old folks were deceived; I was too lazy to study anything except works of imagination, and my character of steadiness was more indebted to my face than to my manners. After going through the routine of school and college, I was sent to study

law, previous to practising at the bar. I had always wished to enter the army, but the vile peace did away with every view of that sort; so, instead of the crimson jacket, I was obliged to assume the dingy uniform of the law.

I was now about twenty-one—six feet high, and with as much beauty as avoided the imputation of ugliness, but, I imagine, not enough to entitle me to the character of handsome. Hitherto my life had been an unbroken level. I had never felt my heart the least moved by love, and this, I suppose, because my father was incessantly boring me to look out for a wife. There is always something disagreeable in a father speaking to his son about love and matrimony; an old man has no sentiment about him, or if he has, it lies buried at the bottom of his purse. I, at least, found the truth of this; and when my father used to harp on this subject, I always, as speedily as possible, put an end to his tune.

My manners, though sometimes lively, were, in general, grave. I never was very fond of company, and I now began to live more secluded than ever. My favourite amusement was to wander alone towards Arthur Seat, and there, throwing myself down on some sunny rock, I used to feast my mind with the fanciful thoughts which the beautiful scenery around called forth. I felt, like another Mirza, among the hills of Bagdad. I heard the hum of the great city, I saw the smoke rising from a thousand palaces, I felt myself amid the haunts of busy men; then turning myself round, everything seemed at once to vanish; houses, and noise, and men, disappeared, and I found myself stretched on a bare rock, the steep hills before me, and the sheep feeding quietly in the green valley beneath.

Such were the thoughts which used to pass along my untroubled mind, like light clouds flitting across the blue of a summer sky.

But I felt that something was wanting to make my dream complete; my heart wearied for some one who might be a partaker and an elevator of my happiness—some bright being, with intelligent countenance, and pale forehead, and dark mournful eyes, whose feelings would be deep as my own, and who would love me with that pure, relying love, without which I felt I could never be content. Such was the visionary portrait which fancy drew, and which my soul loved well to contemplate.

For a couple of years did I lead this unprofitable, but to me delicious sort of life. At this time my father died, and I lost a kind, good-hearted, dear parent. I was told that I had always been a dutiful son, but my own heart reproached me with many an act which had been long forgotten, but which, now that he was gone for ever, rose in fearful and sorrowful array before me. The lapse of time, however, which to some brings grief, to others carries a remedy for their woes. I again began to mix in company, and, for his father's sake, Gerald Aymer, of Lilburn Tower, was everywhere a welcome visitor.

I have always been passionately fond of dancing. I hated a dinner-party; an evening one was not much better; but in a ball I delighted. There is something peculiarly fascinating in the mixture of sweet music and dancing, while brilliant lights are streaming from a thousand lamps, and brighter beams are flashing from beauty's eye. The country-dance inspires, the graceful quadrille pleases, and the waltz whirls every sense into delicious ecstasy!



I had been enjoying a few weeks' shooting at Lilburn, when, on returning to town, I found that my friend, Mrs Noel, was to have a ball that very evening. Mrs Noel was a widow of large fortune. She had only one daughter, who had for many years past resided in England; and to me she had almost been a mother, from my very infancy. Though tired by my journey, a ball at her house was too tempting to be rejected, so I at once resolved to be a partaker in it.

It was late before I arrived at the scene of action, and, still fatigued, I sat down by myself on an easy chair. Casting my eyes round, but in vain, to discover Mrs Noel, I saw, amid the crowd, a young girl who seemed to me the very ideal of loveliness. She was apparently about eighteen, and rather *petite*, but her fine slender figure was like the picture of a sylph. Her hair was of a dark auburn colour, and fell in glossy ringlets over a neck and bosom of transparent whiteness. Her complexion was of that delicate flitting cast which indicated a heart alive to every impulse of tenderness, and from her blue eyes streamed a gentle and winning light, which found its way irresistibly to every heart. So gentle was she, so pure and so lovely, she seemed more like a seraph which had wandered from the bowers of Paradise than any mere creature of mortal mould. Never before had I seen anything in female beauty so touching. My feelings were those of delicious transport. I passed my hand for a moment across my eyes, as if to shut out the excess of delight which almost overpowered my senses: when I looked again, she had vanished, and I almost believed it to have been some brilliant vision which had passed across my fanciful brain.



I cannot tell how long I remained in the posture I was in, my head resting on my hand, and eagerly gazing at the place where she had disappeared, till I could almost believe I again saw her before me. From this reverie I was at length roused by a gentle tap on the shoulder. Starting suddenly, I cast my eyes up; and what were my feelings, when I saw the same bright girl standing by my side! She had her hand in that of Mrs Noel, who, smiling at my agitation, presented her to me as her daughter. What an evening of delight was that! if the spirits in heaven enjoy a tithe of such happiness, *certes* they have reason to be contented.

To make a long story short, within a month I was the accepted lover of Ellen. In a transport of passion, I one day told her how I loved her, and she, innocent girl! with a sweet smile and sweeter blush, put her little white hand into mine; then breaking from my grasp, like a young fawn she flew out of the room, to conceal her confusion, and the tears which I saw rushing to her eyes.

Till a person loves, and is loved, he cannot be said to have lived. A new existence opened to me;—the gloomy thoughts which sometimes used to oppress me were dissipated, and my mind was as tranquil as an evening landscape in Italy. I was happy, and not the least of my happiness arose from the reflection that I contributed to the happiness of Ellen. She, poor thing! was as happy as a first love can make a woman; and when I used to gaze on her beautiful face, beaming with conscious love, I would fold her to my beating heart, and could scarce help wondering that such a being should think me worthy of her love.

But this happiness was too much to last. Nature has given me a warm heart, and to love

is with me to adore: if I love, it is with the deepest, the most romantic passion. But while my whole heart thus pours itself out, I cannot help expecting—it may be vanity, perhaps—that my affection shall be as warmly returned. I must be loved; I must know and perceive that I am loved. My mistress must trust in me with the same boundless confidence I trust in her, and the warm torrent of love which gushes from my heart would be chilled and frozen did it meet with any coldness in her.

Ellen was too modest, and brought up with too much strictness, to allow any display of the affection with which she had been inspired. Indeed, the timidity of her nature made her carry this too far; and had she at this time shown a little more regard for me, much distress might have been spared to both of us. Nature and education, however, had taught her to believe that a woman should treat her lover as a friend, and not till he becomes her husband should she, in any respect, behave to him as a lover. She always treated me with the most gentle kindness,—she sung to me the songs I loved,—she painted those flowers I gathered for her,—she tried to please me in a thousand little artless ways which could not fail to touch my heart; but, in spite of all this, there was something wanting to make me happy. There was too little, or rather a total want, of warmth in her love to me, which distressed, and at times rendered me miserable. If I took her hand, she passively permitted it, but there was no kind pressure responsive to my own; if I folded her in my arms, I felt no bosom clinging to mine; if I snatched a parting kiss, a crimsoning blush was the only sign of emotion she betrayed. Her heart,

in reality, was not cold, but it was too pure for this world; and believing it improper to show even to me those feelings of affection which were growing around her heart, she went into the opposite extreme of coldness,—a coldness which seemed almost to amount to indifference.

Our wedding-day was at length fixed, and here again Ellen's rigid ideas interfered; and while I wished it to take place in three days, she decided that it should not be for three months. I believe, after all, that Ellen, poor girl, had a melancholy foresight of what was to happen, and was unwilling to bind me in bonds which I might afterwards regret had ever been tied: but she was wrong; had we at that time been married, my heart would have been hers, and hers alone, for ever. She was fixed, however, in her resolution, nor would she even receive from me a written promise by which we might in some manner have been bound to each other. "You may claim me this day three months," said she, "if you *then* shall think me worthy; but from you I will receive no promise; your heart is what I ask; with that, your promise would be superfluous; without it, worse than useless. I have only to add, our engagement, Gerald, must be kept secret; no one shall know it from me,—not even Florence Cecil."

Florence Cecil was a young English lady, who had been at the same school with Ellen. At school, every one except misanthropes contract particular friendships, and Florence Cecil and Ellen Noel soon became sister-friends. I understood that they were of very opposite dispositions; the former being all passion, while the latter was all gentleness; and thus it generally is, *that* friendship is the firmest which is formed from the most dis-

cordant materials; and in choosing a friend, we generally look for those qualities in which we ourselves are most deficient. Florence was an orphan, and, I was told, both rich and handsome. I had never seen her, as she had only very lately come down, along with her brother, from England, on a visit to some Scottish relations.

Scarcely had Ellen pronounced the name of Florence Cecil, when that lady was announced. She was above the middling stature, and was dressed in a dark *pelisse* of the Spanish fashion, which, fitting tightly to the shape, displayed the fine proportions of her luxuriant form, and a swelling bosom, which seemed to press against the silk, as if anxious to burst from its soft confinement. The expression of her face was the very opposite to Ellen's; she wanted the blue eyes and gentle look of the latter, but there was a dignity about her, and yet a feminine sweetness, which more accorded with the ideas I had formerly entertained of female beauty. Her long hair was very dark, and while it harmonised with the rich glow of her complexion, it contrasted powerfully with her forehead, which seemed to have been washed by the lilies, it was of such snowy whiteness. Her large eyes were of the deepest black, and their pensive expression was softened into richness by the jetty eye-lashes which fringed them; and at times such fire would flash from them, as showed the warm nature of the heart to which they were the eloquent index.

If I was struck with the appearance of Florence Cecil, I was still more delighted by the attractions of her mind. Like myself, she was enthusiastically fond of poetry: without being sentimental, her



soul was full of romance; and when she talked of love, there was an earnest, a thrilling expression in her face and manner, which showed how tremblingly alive she was to every impulse of gentle affection.

I returned home, charmed with the beauty and kindness of Florence Cecil, which I could not help contrasting with the coldness and reserve of Ellen. From this time, there was scarcely a day in which I did not see Florence, and every hour was placing my heart and honour in greater peril. I would not believe that I was in any danger of loving her, and when I saw my sweet and kind-hearted Ellen, and heard her building airy castles of future happiness, I knew it was impossible I could desert her, impossible that I should inflict such a wound on the peace of her gentle bosom.

But every hour, as it flew on, was dragging me nearer to the precipice of dishonour. I at length awoke from the dream in which I had been reveling—awoke to a full sense of my actual misery. I found that I no longer loved Ellen, or loved her only as a brother, while my soul adored Florence Cecil with the devotion of an idolater. I loved her with the most impetuous passion. The very opposition which it met with served as fuel to the flame which devoured me: uncontrollable, its violence affected my very life, and in an evil hour I told her how I loved, and heard that I was beloved in return. Now was my misery completed. I was bound in honour to a woman whom I more than esteemed; and yet, forgetting every duty, I had engaged the affections of her friend; to one I must prove a villain. My heart bled at the misery I would inflict on Ellen, and yet I could not think of wedding her, when my heart

had been given to another. Long did I struggle between duty and inclination, but at last love completed his triumph over honour; I resolved to marry Florence Cecil, and to abandon poor Ellen.

From this moment I never knew peace, except when in Florence Cecil's company; there, indeed, I forgot everything but love,—there, I existed in an intoxication of delight; but when away from her, the wound I had inflicted on Ellen was ever before my eyes. I execrated myself as a wretch—a dishonoured villain. My breast was a hell within me, compared to which I thought all other hells would be beds of roses; and yet all this I was content to suffer, so that I might be loved by Florence.

I had now entirely deserted the Noels. I never went near the house, nor did I ever see Ellen; and I began to hope that she had forgotten me. I soothed my remorse, by reflecting that she had never exhibited much passion for me, and that, the first shock being over, the distress which I believed I had occasioned only existed, perhaps, in my own heated imagination.

Encouraged by these reflections, I pressed Florence to name a day for our marriage. A delicious blush overspread her happy face, as she named that day month,—the day on which she attained majority, and became the uncontrolled mistress of her actions. I heard her in silence; in truth, I was deeply affected, for, by a strange and melancholy coincidence, the day she proposed was the day which poor Ellen had formerly fixed for our marriage. From that moment a vague presentiment came over my mind of some evil I knew not what, but it seemed to me that that day was destined, in some way or other, to be fatal to me.

A few days after this, I was engaged to dine at a gentleman's house a few miles distant from town. Arriving there too soon, I resolved to while away the time, by rambling among the adjacent pleasure-grounds. It was a bright and beautiful day in June; the lilacs which embowered the walks had put forth their gayest blossoms,—the golden flowers of the laburnum were drooping in rich clusters from their green branches,—and the perfume of a thousand flowers was wafted gently on by the sleepy breeze. As I sauntered along, sadly musing on the past, I beheld Ellen walking quietly a little way before me. We came upon each other so abruptly, that it was impossible to avoid each other.

Poor Ellen! how dejected did she look, and how sadly was she altered from what she was, when, like a bright vision, she first crossed my path in her mother's house! *then* she was all life and smiles, and as lovely as a seraph; *now*, her eyes were dim, but their sweet expression still remained, and the delicate colour which used to flit about her cheeks had given place to a care-looking and melancholy paleness.

When she perceived me, her cheeks for a moment were faintly flushed, and she hurriedly turned aside her head; recovering herself, however, she accosted me with the air of one who was too proud to show that she had ever been offended. But though there was no pique exhibited in her behaviour, I could see that insulted love, and womanly pride, and tenderness of heart, were all struggling for the mastery in her agitated bosom. For a time, embarrassed by our feelings and situation, we walked together in silence, or, what conversation we did attempt only showed how incapable

we were of supporting it. I felt my bosom warming to the poor girl. I could have wept to see how sadly misery had altered her whom I once loved, and I was filled with remorse when I thought that that misery had been caused by me. After a struggle, I could assume indifference no longer and, turning to her, I said, with an agonised heart,

"Ellen, you have been very ill; you are so pale, so sadly changed, since"—I could not finish the sentence I had so inadvertently begun.

"Since what?" said she, turning steadily round, with a reproachful yet sorrowful look, "since what, Gerald?"

"Since I was a villain, Ellen, a base, dishonoured wretch, detested by myself as I am by thee."

She said nothing, but a tear which filled her eye was a more affecting commentary than the most eloquent words.

"But you are revenged, Ellen. Oh, I carry in my breast a fiend which goads me to madness. Ellen, Ellen, the curse of a broken vow is upon me, and here or hereafter I can never again expect to be at rest!"

As I thus spoke, Ellen turned even more pale than before; and looking timidly at me, she said,

"Gerald, if my forgiveness can make you happy, take it, you have long had it. Though my hopes, (and here her words faltered,) though my hopes have been withered, yet I could never feel resentment against one whom I confess I once loved. 'Tis no matter what now becomes of *me*, but if hereafter you should ever think of Ellen, think kindly."

As she spoke these last words, the tears began to flow down her pale cheeks. Feeble, and exhausted by her agitation, she in vain tried to support the firmness she had at first assumed. She



sobbed, and sighed with such bitter grief, that I thought her little heart would have burst; mine, too, was near the breaking. I forgot Florence; I forgot the whole world except Ellen, and my first love rushed upon me with overpowering violence. I renewed my vows to her; I told her, that, looking on the past as a troubled dream, we would yet be happy; and I painted the future happiness we might enjoy in the most impassioned and glowing language. As I spoke, her eye brightened, and her whole face was overspread with a blush.

"Answer me one question," and she seemed almost breathless,—“answer me one question: Are you not engaged to another?”

She looked at me as if her life depended on my words. I could not speak, but she read my answer in my face, and slowly and mournfully withdrew her gaze. The hope which had lighted up her eyes was extinguished; the revulsion of her feelings was too strong for her weak frame, and, clasping her hands across her bosom, she fell senseless at my feet. For a moment I felt stupified, but, instantly recovering, I flew to her, and raised her in my arms;—I kissed her blanched lips, I pressed her to my heart, and gladly would I have purchased her life at the ransom of my own. At that moment I saw Florence standing beside us;—how she happened to be there I know not,—but there she stood, and my distress was complete. I said nothing; but, laying Ellen gently down, I went off to procure assistance.

When I returned, neither Florence nor Ellen was to be seen. Ellen must have recovered so as to leave the place with her friend. As for me, I was weighed down by that fatality which seemed

to hang about me; I could stay no longer; so, calling my horse, I instantly galloped home.

I must now be brief in what remains of my story. The passion I had shown for Ellen was but the outrageous violence of pity. It passed away with the occasion which had excited my feelings, and my love for Florence revived with all its former strength. But, alas! the presentiments of misery which had long hung over my mind were now to be realised, and Ellen was indeed avenged for my weakness and perfidy. She had told Florence the story of her woes; and that high-minded girl, disdaining a connexion with one who had so injured her friend, tore me from her heart—for I believe she did love me—and cast me off for ever. I submitted in silence; it was vain to strive against fate, and, with a sorrowful heart, I bade her an eternal farewell.

Her brother, however, was not so easily to be satisfied. He saw my engagement to his sister broken off without any apparent reason—Florence, through pity to me, had concealed the cause of our separation—and he naturally concluded—for man is generally the aggressor—that I had been trifling with the affections of his sister, and the honour of his family. I might easily have avoided a duel, but I cared not for life; I was tired of this world, and I believed I could not be more miserable in a future. The moment we were to fire I threw my pistol from me, and I remember nothing farther till I found myself lying in a bed in this little cottage from which I write. I had been wounded, but I believe not desperately; severely enough, however, to prevent me being conveyed to my own home.

Here, then, on a lonesome sick-bed, have I had time to meditate on my past life. My chamber is

as gloomy as my thoughts; for the jessamine and honeysuckle, falling in clusters over the window, darken even the small light which they admit, and beyond that I can see nothing but the waving branches of a dark forest. But this gloom is in unison with my own melancholy prospects; I am lying wounded in a lonely cottage. Ellen, I cannot bear to think of *her*,—Florence has forsaken me,—no one cares whether I live or die. I am an isolated being, and I sometimes wish that my antagonist had taken a surer aim. But reflection and religion have come to my aid, and to them do I owe the comparative tranquillity which, like a soft garment, wraps round my long harassed soul. O religion! thou friend of the mourner! In the hour of prosperity we may reject thy gentle advances, but when the storm beats round us, and human assistance is vain, then does the soul turn trembling to thee as its only solace, then does it look to Heaven as its only friend. I now see my errors, and mourn for them; I pity poor Ellen, for I once loved her, and the vow which I broke must ever stand in sorrowful reproach before me; I still love Florence, and I feel that, rejected by her, I can never again love another. When I recover from my wound, I shall leave my native land for some far distant clime; and a life of toil in the service of my country shall make some small atonement for the misery which the errors of my youth have occasioned. Forgotten by all I loved, my last prayer shall be for Ellen,—my last thought shall be of Florence. I shall give this little MS. to my kind old aunt, who alone has not deserted me in my adversity. Farewell.

When I received the foregoing MS. from my

dear nephew, I had no intention of adding to it a single line ; but events have since happened, which I think it my duty to record, as forming a kind of sequel to his history.

After unburthening his mind by what he had written, he seemed rather exhausted, but his spirits were better than they had been for some days. Still there was a melancholy quietness about him, an apathy to what was passing, which formed a strong contrast to his former impetuosity and warmth of feeling. The place in which he was was by no means calculated to raise his spirits. It was a small thatched cottage, which skirted a deep wood ; nothing was to be seen but the dark waving branches, nothing was to be heard but the wind moaning among the trees—I daresay, however, this gloom pleased poor Gerald.

The next day was the brightest and loveliest I had seen for a long time, and even the cottage seemed to participate in the liveliness of the weather. The sun shot its glittering rays through the veil of jessamine which half-closed the little window, the swallows were seen darting to and fro about their mud dwellings, a solitary chirp was sometimes heard from the drowsy birds as they sat half-sleeping among the branches ; but all this could not enliven poor Gerald. His spirits were not gloomy, but he was very gentle and quiet, and seemed oppressed by some internal foreboding of woe.

As we sat alone, a gentle tap was heard at the door, which was instantly followed by the silvery tones of a female asking for admittance. Gerald started up when he heard the soft voice, and in an agitated manner I heard him exclaim, " Florence ! " When I opened the door, a young lady entered,

dressed in deep mourning. She was, I think, the most beautiful girl I ever beheld, and there was an expression of pensiveness in her face, which heightened the interest her dark eyes immediately inspired. She bowed to me as she entered, and then cast her eyes eagerly around the apartment: "My poor Gerald!" she said, as she saw the pale countenance of him she had loved. "Poor, poor Gerald! is it thus I see you?" As she spoke, the tears burst from her black eyes, and she flung herself on his bosom, and imprinted a kiss on his white brow; at that moment I was called out of the room. When I returned, Gerald was sitting with his arm round Florence's slender waist; affection was beaming in both their eyes; pale as he was, I never saw him looking more handsome than in that bright but fleeting moment; and Florence seemed so happy in her love, that, old as I was, I almost envied the warm-hearted girl. Poor things! alas! alas! it was perhaps the last moment of happiness they were to enjoy; like the sun, which, long struggling through stormy clouds, shines brightly for an instant in the glowing west, and then sinks for the night into the dark depths of the ocean.

As I drew near them, I heard Florence reminding Gerald that this very day was to have been their marriage-day. For a time he was silent, and then he slowly said, as if to himself, "Poor Ellen, and this day too I was to have been wedded to thee." A deep cloud instantly passed over Florence's countenance, and her cheerfulness vanished!—"Poor Ellen!" she mournfully said, "poor Ellen!" Do you hear that dull bell, Gerald, which so heavily sounds through the trees? that bell tolls for poor Ellen's funeral: at this very moment they



will be bearing her coffin to the grave." The murder was out; the unguarded sorrow of Florence had revealed the sad tidings of Ellen's death, which, fearful of the consequences, I had anxiously concealed from Gerald. I was greatly relieved, however, for at first he did not seem to betray much emotion, but gradually his eyes became fixed, and a blueness overspread his temples. "Is Ellen indeed dead?" said he, in a hollow voice; "then the dark whispers of fate, which have long sounded in my ears, are indeed come to pass; one more scene, and the play is at an end." He paused, and we stood beside him for some minutes in silence. All at once the bell ceased tolling; Gerald started up, and looking wildly around, he exclaimed—"Haste, haste, the bell has rung out—the bride is waiting in the damp churchyard, and you would not keep the bridegroom here. Come near me, come near me, sweet bird, and say Good-bye; for the road is very cold, and no one must go with me." As he thus raved, poor Florence looked at him with a sorrowful look and tearful eye, "Gerald," she tenderly said, "Gerald." The soft sound of her voice seemed to recall his wandering senses. The wildness of his face was turned to gentleness. He took hold of her little hand, and with his other he grasped mine—"Farewell, my kind aunt—farewell, my last-loved Florence." His eye dimmed, his grasp relaxed to feebleness, his head drooped, and as he fell back he mournfully sighed, "Bury me near Ellen." It was all over—Gerald Aymer was no more.

## A Desperate Act.

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THE person who is to form the object of our hero-worship for a quarter of an hour—not for his virtues or his achievements, but rather for the interest he draws to himself from one remarkable act of his life, around which almost all his thoughts and feelings afterwards revolved—was William Wilson, the only son of a butcher, resident in the Canon-gate of Edinburgh. The father was reputed rich; and certainly discharged his duty to the boy, in so far as a father could, by sending him to a good school and treating him kindly—yet using a stern severity when the youth contravened, as he often did, his advice and example. And he frequently did; we should rather say that scarcely a day passed over the head of the young scamp that he was out of a fight, or a row, or mischief of some sort. Yet those who associated with him, say that he was a most inconsistent little wretch, for, while he would delight in getting one of the butchers to allow him to kill a calf, or in hunting cats to the death, terrierising rats, engaging in double stand-up fights, or crucifying street eccentricities, he had a kind of weak tenderness about him, which he would display in very soft-looking offices of friend-

ship, or in whimpering at a sentimental story, with much less of the old rugged woodcut pathos in it than in the popular stories of the time—"Gregor's Ghost," "Captain Glen," "Billy Taylor," or "William and Sally"—which then exercised such dominion over young sympathies, and which have given place to the novel of our day.

It is almost needless to say that one day this promising youth got into a scrape, for we could not have told when he was out of one, but this peculiar affair—no less than almost beating the life out of one of the sons of a gentleman, who lived in Lothian Hut, and who was one of his father's best customers—was so obnoxious to the old man, that he threatened him with condign punishment. He had not gone home to dinner, nor would he. The horror of the expected punishment haunted him; it made his hair stand on end, till, as he said afterwards, his bonnet almost moved; it thrilled through him, it made his eye roll wildly like the orbit-swirl of epilepsy. To go home was simply an impossibility, and that ended the question—but where was he to go? If to a friend's, he would be sent home, and he had no money to flee with. He prowled through the streets till nine o'clock, when a companion, of the name of Kemp, got him advised to go down to the house of an old woman, called Jenny Morison, in Bell's Close. Kemp had the command, through the kindness of an aunt, of the sum of threepence, and that would leave four farthings of a remainder, after satisfying the demands of the lodging-keeper. Kemp saw him also housed, and giving him, somewhat grandly, the loan, left him to his night's rest.

He was not known to the woman, nor the

woman to him, yet she felt for him; and, having given him a plate of porridge, sent him to his cell. It was a miserable place—damp walls, rat-holes, intolerable smells—a small bed in a corner—a chair. He cast off his clothes, with no more light than a moonbeam, and jumped in—scarcely *amongst* clothes, only under a coarse coverlit. He had wandered all day, and was exhausted; his fancy and flesh were at war—his eyelids drooped, and yet his brain burned—shame, vexation, fear, anxiety, fought against sleep; and sleep in the flesh would conquer all his emotions. And it did; he was beyond the reach of the rod, even in dreams.

But his relief was not to last. He awoke about two in the morning, and soon ascertained that it was a noise had scared sleep. He listened—the noise was overhead, and he rose and knocked on the boards, which served for the floor above, and which were easily within his reach as he stood on the truckle bed. In doing this, he looked up, and saw, at one or two parts, openings in the planks, through which slight glimmerings of light came. He lay down again, and was soon asleep, when he was once more roused by a noise resembling wrestling and bumping on the floor, with occasional moans or groans. The thought occurred to him that there was some terrible struggle going on between fiercely contending parties, and he was confirmed in this by some broken words, which, when he put them together—a work in which the fancy had probably some share—he thought he could distinguish a cry to “tie his feet.” The near proximity of a fight, even in the form of a variety from what, in his contentious and excited life, he loved so well, had now no charms for him, unless he could have got into the midst of it; but,

as matters stood with him, he felt enraged at being twice roused from that rest which liberated him from the miserable thoughts of his situation.

He would have given the whole world for relief from the gnawing worm within, and this one cause kept him in the torture which nature was doing her best to relieve him from. The scuffle was not finished, the thumping came loud and louder, and the trailing and rubbing on the floor were, if possible, increased. He knocked again, but his intimated displeasure produced no pause. Meanwhile the fever of pain and bodily exhaustion increased upon a temperament fiery and imperious; and, clenching his teeth, he uttered cursings, even worse than the streets of Edinburgh witness from her younger children. Again he knocked, and again he was unheeded. There was offended pride of power now mixing with his other feelings, for he was, in truth, a young tyrant, whose highest ambition it was to rule his own little world of blackguard associates.

"Devil take you!" at length he uttered, "but I will silence you."

And the next moment he was on the floor, searching for a long butcher's knife, which it was his delight to carry about with him, and with which he had cut the throat of many a grimalkin. The touch of his father's professional instrument—become to him, by habit and inclination, like that of the tomahawk to the wild Indian—seemed to collect together every one of his distracting feelings, his anger, his misery, his fevered palpitations, into one energy. He got hold of it—he rejoiced in the glance it gave, as he waved it in the light of the moon, which, having risen higher, and got through obstructing clouds, shone full and bright



into the cellar. He sprang upon the bed, which creaked with the sudden leap, and it just so happened that the noise was at that moment at its height. The glimmering of the light through the openings, now rendered faint by the moonlight, still enabled him to find a chink, along which he run his finger, till he came to the spot where it seemed a down-trodden individual was resisting opponents. The dull sound in the wood directed him, and feeling for the continuation of the chink, he thrust in the point of the blade—a stern thrust—up went the knife to the hilt—a cry of agony, like nothing he had ever heard on earth—and a drop, dropping, of blood, which increased to a gush—warm, as it fell on his face, blinding him, and saturating his shirt.

Not a moment was now to be lost. He sprang again to the floor. He had been a fearless youth, but he felt now, for the first time, that his hand had accomplished something which awed and stupefied him. He had committed a murder—a murder of a human creature; and the instinct which guards our common nature wrought within him, indicating the distinction between an immortal being and a brute. Hurrying on his clothes, he was dressed in a few minutes; his effort was to flee, but he had remaining in him some calculation. He wiped the knife—thought for a moment what to do with it—and coming quickly to the conclusion that it would discover him if he threw it away, put it into his coat-pocket. The sash resisted him, but the vigour of his despair overcame the obstacle—he was on the ground. Looking about, he found himself in the next close or alley, a place which he well knew, and where he had often hidden in his games of search. Taking to his heels, he flew down the High Street,

turned into Leith Wynd, escaped the night-watch, and was on his way to Leith. His excitement and rapid movements made him perspire violently, so that the bloody shirt, which had been sticking to his skin, smoked, and sent up into his nostrils the steam of what he was sure was the murdered man or woman's blood. Yet he hurried on, increasing his speed as he got farther away from the scene, and as the imagination got time to work up its pictures. Nor did he stop till he was met by an obstacle, which he might in vain try to surmount—no other than the margin of the sea, at the foot of Baltic Street, and there he stood. The check to his course seemed to have the effect of somewhat reining up his wild thoughts, and a trace of his constitutional resolution was shown as he paused, crossed his arms, and cast his eye upon the sea, as it lay calm and placid, under a clear, full, midnight moon. So strangely formed a being is man, that although he was certain he had killed a human being who never injured him, though only two miles distant from the fatal spot, though only twenty minutes had elapsed since he made the knife-thrust, the objects had already enough of distance, in both time and space, to allow of giving precedence to a mere bodily feeling. The present evil dominates; a bodily twinge rules the imagination. The sticking shirt annoyed him—yea, a mere skin annoyance, a slight pathological touch, kept for a time at bay the visions which had chased him all that distance as a maniac. It might have been that he could not bear the blood, and that he felt the shirt as a painful evidence against him; yet he confessed afterwards, that the feeling that ruled him at that moment was a wish to be relieved from the irksomeness of the adhesion. He pulled

off his jacket and waistcoat, drew his shirt over his head, and threw it down; and having proceeded so far, he resolved on washing away from his body all traces of the blood. His trousers and stockings followed, and he stood naked, ready to wade in.

At that moment he heard a shout behind him, "Stop there, ho!" and, on looking round, he saw two dark figures running towards him, from the direction of Baltic Street. Fear, in certain high states, is folly. There is something wrong about our mechanism: instincts of self-preservation become inflamed into passion, and lead the other way. He snatched up his clothes—all but the bloody shirt, which he felt himself restrained from touching—and took flight along the sands towards Bathfield. Nor did he slacken his pace for an instant in obedience to the halloo, which reached his ear only to quicken his energies. Even though the sounds ceased, and there was no indication of the figures having continued their pursuit, he still ran, as if for a wager, and slackened only when he was well on to the Figgate Whins. In all this course, it could not be but that he would be seen. The moon was still bright, and it was now three in the morning—an hour when the bottle-blowers in Salamander Street are often astir to begin their work. This may account for Wilson's subsequent statement, that when he passed the cones, a loud shout saluted his ears, a circumstance that frightened him more than his original pursuers. He admitted, too, that such was his agitation in this extraordinary flight, that he never thought of the shirt, which was so sure, as a white object on the sands, to be picked up by the individuals from Baltic Street, who, he was satisfied, had followed him only a short way, and would return.

When he stopped at the Figgate Whins, the act was the result of utter exhaustion; but, seating himself on one of the boulders common on the beach there, he contrived to get himself again clothed. This process he got through as hurriedly as his shivering limbs and benumbed fingers would admit, and being considerably enough under the apprehension that some one of those who had seen him would come up and surprise him, he made for the road between Leith and Portobello—yet still unresolved as to what refuge he would betake himself to. The abatement of his terror allowed of something like forecast, and it occurred that he might venture back, by the road, to Leith, and ascertain whether it was not now too late to get hold of his shirt, which might probably not have been noticed by his pursuers. The resolution had something of his natural foolhardiness in it, but there was also calculation—a quality in which his proficiency had been tested by escapes where his companions had been caught in the meshes of the criminal law. Looking carefully about, and seeing no one, he commenced his return, and never halted till he was again in Baltic Street, where it behoved him to be more cautious. Yet there was no need, for no one was astir, and he held down to the beach, where the receding tide gave him hopes that he would find the linen. He hastened to the spot. The shirt was gone; and he shuddered as he recollected that his name, by the careful hands of a kind and loving mother, was written in printing ink on the side-gusset.

The circumstance I have now mentioned scared him from Leith,—a direction he had first taken with the intention of getting on board a vessel for

America,—but there was an additional reason why he should retrace his flight eastwards. The flash of recollection as to his name being on the shirt was followed by putting his hand into his pocket to ascertain if the knife was there. It had fallen out, probably in his flight; at least he could not find it at the place where he had deposited his clothes. This alarmed him still more, in consequence of his having, like other youths, had a fancy for carving his name on the heft. The shirt and the knife together, found on the sands, would settle any question regarding the author of the murder. Under these considerations, he resolved upon walking back on the sands, and trying to find the lost instrument. He made the attempt, but in vain: he could not find it, and now what was he to do? Whither go? All the money he had was the single penny got from Kemp, and he had no means of getting more. Wherever he fled he must beg to be able to exist, and his supplications would expose him to detection. He resolved, at length, to go forward to Musselburgh, where he had an uncle, whom he thought he could trust, and he accordingly hurried on in that direction, so as to arrive as early as possible, that he might skulk in the meantime, and until Mr Gilmour, his mother's brother, who was a late riser, was up. It was a long and painful effort for him—unslept, exhausted, and torn by apprehension and remorse as he was—but he arrived before five. The night had been beautiful, and the morning promised to break in sunshine, for the sky was clear of clouds, and the winds hushed to a silence, which inspired awe, as an element to mix with his tumultuous emotions.



Reaching the Links, he got into a hollow among bushes of whins and brooms, and there lying down, he fell fast asleep.

When he opened his eyes the sun was far above the horizon—it was well on to nine o'clock. He had overslept his intention, and shuddered when he awoke to his dark recollections, in the face of a smiling day. What would he now have given to be allowed to suffer that punishment, the terror of which had been the cause of all his misery, on the condition of being free from these terrible thoughts! The very form of a man in the distance, as he cast his eye round, was to him a spectre, yet he could not get to his uncle's house but through a part of the High Street, and how to accomplish that cost him many thoughts. His resolution was taxed, and he girded himself up. On he went, and reached the east end of the town, which he had no sooner entered, than he found the windows drawn up, and protruded heads, and doors filled with women, and here and there knots of wise-acre-looking men, all listening to a speech-crying stentor, bawling out, at the top of his lungs, the intelligence of a horrible and bloody murder committed on the person of a bank porter, of the name of Begbie, who had been barbarously stabbed with a knife on the previous night, in one of the very darkest closes in Edinburgh—every word of which went home to his heart as resolutely and effectually as the blade of his gully did into that of his unknown victim. He shrunk into himself, and would have fled from the gaze of the people, who, no doubt, were looking at him. And it was a man Begbie whom he had murdered! How strange—never such a thought entered his mind, though we may indulge in the wonder—how

strange that these people of Musselburgh should have known the name of his victim before him! that they should have known even that a man had been killed, while he who did the ruthless deed was ignorant of it! Oh that the streets of Musselburgh, which resounded to the cries of that cyclo-borus, would swallow him up! But he dared not fly, they would pursue him—he could not go back, it would create suspicion—he must get refuge, for his heart was weary of that terrible beating, and his legs trembled, as if they would no longer support him—and his tongue would not utter “Not guilty” if any of those people should seize him on the instant, and drag him to justice. Did his mother, whose image, in all these scenes, had flitted about, restless and fitful, and casting dear but sorrowful looks at him, hear the words cried by that man—from the wide mouth of the more experienced vendors of the horrible in Edinburgh? How the thoughts came and went, glanced and burned, and darted away, and came, and mixed, and swirled in circles through his brain! Yet he held on his way until he came to his uncle’s door.

The servant opened, with a face occupied by the old welcome smile to Bill.

“But, gude sake! what’s the matter wi’ ye?” she said, as she looked wildly into his face. “The laddie’s a’ covered wi’ bluid. Here, maister, look here.”

“What is the meaning of all this?” said the uncle, as he came from his breakfast parlour, with his mouth half-filled with toast. “What is the matter with you, man? why are you here at this hour, in this state? Whose blood is that on your face?—your own, or one of your father’s calves, or that man Begbie’s, who was killed last night?”

"Let me in, let me in," cried Bill, as he rushed past his interrogator, and got into the parlour where he threw himself upon a chair.

"And you've nothing to say?" inquired again his uncle, as he followed anxiously. "Barbara, bring water and a towel—we will clear him of the blood at any rate."

And Barbara was presently occupied in loosening his neckcloth.

"And a' doun the vest—Mercy save us! And whaur's the callant's sark?"

"Has he no shirt on, woman?" said Mr Gilmour, as he stood gazing and wondering.

"The never an inch mair than he had that mornin' when his mither bore him."

"Speak, man; what is the meaning of all this?" said Mr Gilmour.

The lad was silent, while Barbara, with a wet end of a towel, was busy rubbing at his face.

"No answer?"

"I winna, I canna, I daurna," was the reply.

"More wonderful still!" exclaimed the uncle, in great anxiety and apprehension.

"Has your father struck you?"

"No."

"Have you cut yourself?"

"No."

"Have you been fighting?"

"No."

"Have you been in the killing-house?"

"No."

"And you cannot tell where your shirt is?"

"No."

"The lad's frightened," said the woman, sympathetically.

"Not he," replied the master. "There's some-

thing wrong. Bring me my hat and my stick. I'll go in to Gabriel."

The servant flustered as she obeyed, and Mr Gilmour, beckoning her to the door, said—

"Take care, and keep him in till I return. He was always a wild boy, and I fear there is something serious. I will be back to dinner."

"It's that street harangue that frightens me," she replied; "and yet a body could hardly think he could do that."

"Out of the question," said he, as he departed; "but still there's something that troubles me. He's my sister's son."

And, leaving the house, the uncle went direct to the inn from whence the stage started, took his seat, and reached Edinburgh, making thereupon directly to the Canongate.

"Oh, I'm so glad you are come," said Mrs Wilson, as she opened the door to him. "Have you heard anything of Bill? We have two policemen in the house, and I am distracted."

"Be calm," said he, as he went into the parlour, where the men were sitting. He took a chair, and was silent, till he should learn more. Meanwhile, the father himself entered, and seated himself, in wonder at all these strange doings.

"Has your son been with you all night?" said the detective, a shrewd man, and among the first who had a name, in Edinburgh, in his peculiar department.

"No," replied Mrs Wilson. "I will tell the truth, however sore to a mother's heart."

"Has he been in the habit of being absent at night?"

"He never was before, since he was born."

"Have you any reason for supposing why he has been absent?"

"Why," replied the butcher, "the boy is a little wild, but, upon the whole, good-hearted and generous. He thrashed the son of Mr Hunter of Lothian Hut; and, because he understood there was punishment waiting at home, he told a companion that he was afraid to return."

"Was the boy Hunter cut, so as to bleed?"

"Not at all—it was what they call a dry thrashing—not even a bloody nose."

"Does he ever go among your shambles?"

"Too fond of it."

"But was he known to be there yesterday?"

"It was not a killing-day, and the door was not even opened."

"Have you any of his shirts?"

At this question Mr Gilmour looked more grave.

"Ay," replied the wife. "He has a dozen, all spun by me—and cut and sewed by me: he has been well cared for—he is my only child."

"Let me see one of them."

Mrs Wilson went to a drawer, and brought forth an example of her handiwork—a snow-white linen shirt.

"This does you credit, Mrs Wilson," said the officer, as he unfolded the shirt, and carefully examined that part where the name is generally in the practice of Scottish housewives, marked. "I see his name upon it, and the figure 6."

"Ay, sir. We used to sew these marks, but the new ink is better, and saves time."

The officer put his hand into his wide side-pocket, drew out a bundle, took from off it a piece of brown paper, and begun to unroll a blood-stained shirt.

Without uttering a word, the mother fixed her eye on the object so well known to her, stretched



forth her hand, firm and unshaking, examined it, and looked at the mark.

"That is William's shirt," she said. "He got it from me, out of the fold, yesterday morning."

"Let me see it, said the uncle, as he took it into his hands, and examined carefully the breast, and especially the back, a great part of which had been literally drenched with blood—now dry and glistening.

The officer was meanwhile watching the parties. He was a detective, and thought it a merit to be ingenious. Looking to the butcher—

"Is that the blood of a beast or a human creature?"

"That I cannot answer," replied he. "I never could find any difference."

Mr Gilmour having finished his examination, returned the shirt to the officer.

"How can you account," said he, "for the blood on the back, as if it had run down his neck?"

The officer was puzzled.

"The blow given Begbie," he replied—"I cast no charge anywhere—but the thrust by which Begbie was killed, ran right into the heart; and we have only to suppose the murderer to have been stooping a little, to account for such a circumstance as you have mentioned. The blood, the doctor says, would spurt out in a sudden gush."

He then proceeded to roll up the shirt, with all the care of a laundress, and having deposited it in his pocket, he next drew out, from a pocket on the other side, a second brown paper packet, unrolled it, and held up a knife.

"Do you know that instrument?" he said to the father. "Do not rub it. There are blotches of blood on the white handle."

"Too well," was the reply; "my son's name is on it."

The mother's white lip quivered, but she said nothing, as her eye sought the well-known instrument.

"Could you tell me where these things were got?" inquired the father.

"On Leith Sands," replied the officer.

Mr Gilmour hereupon rose from his seat, slipped out, and running across the street, entered the shop, where he found Joe White, a confidential servant of the butcher's—very fond of Bill, and a trustworthy fellow.

"Joe," said he, "there's something wrong with your friend Bill. Take your master's pony, and ride, as quick as Rory's breath will enable him to hold out, down to my house. See Barbara, and whisper in her ear, to take Bill west, to her brother William's house in Fisherrow, and get him concealed there."

The alarmed Joe was off on the instant, and Mr Gilmour, on recrossing the street, met the officers coming out of the house.

"You're the young man's uncle?" said he who had been spokesman.

"Yes, the mother's brother."

"Your name?"

"Gilmour."

"Where do you reside?"

"In the High Street of Musselburgh."

At that moment Joe emerged from the close where the stable was, leading the pony, which must have been ready for some other service; and he had no sooner mounted than the detective laid hold of the bridle.

"Where for, my lad?"

"To the Marquis's park at Portobello for a dozen o' gimmers."

"Well, go on, but don't break the pony's wind."

Then, turning round, as Joe departed in no seeming hurry, he whispered some words in the ear of the other officer, who immediately set off up the High Street.

Mr Gilmour was satisfied of two things: first, that the officer was despatched for a horse to go and search his house; and, secondly, that Joe would long before have that house ready for his visit. On getting again into the parlour, he found the father and mother sitting silent, looking into each other's faces, and apparently unable to make a single comment on the extraordinary scene they had witnessed. The uncle resumed his chair.

"Bill came to me this morning," he said, "all covered with blood, and without his shirt. His shoes were covered with sand, soaked with wet, as if he had been upon the sea-shore."

"What did he say?" inquired the mother.

"He would say nothing, or rather he did say something that is not calculated to comfort us. When asked why his shirt was amissing, he replied, 'I winna, I canna, I daurna tell.'"

"This looks worst of all," said the father.

The mother made no remark, but sat still, and, as it would almost have seemed, composed. The speech-criers had been down the Canongate early in the morning, and now a second couple, one on each side, were busy making the precincts ring with their ominous bawl. It is well known with what avidity the servants purchase these distorted and often disgusting accounts, which are generally drawn up by low blackguards connected with some equally low printer. On this occasion, Mrs Wil-

son's servant had been out making a purchase; and, no doubt, considering that her mistress would be highly gratified by a perusal of the bill, she opened the parlour door, and, coming up to her, put the long bit of coarse paper into her hands. Her mistress did not reject it. She held the paper in her hand, and, without apparently paying heed to it, she said to her brother—

“I suffered much in bearing this boy; I have suffered much in rearing him; and I suffer much this day. But my heart tells me that he did not commit this crime.”

Both the men shook their heads; and, as she looked at them, she was meditative—probably calling up mental resources—and all the while crumpling up unwittingly the paper, until she had it rolled up in a ball, within her nervously closed hand.

“Let me read the paper,” said Mr Gilmour.

She handed it to him, and he proceeded to undo it—a work of some difficulty; for although it had only been for a few minutes in her hand, it was wet and glued with perspiration.

“Let me see,” continued the uncle, as he tried to decipher the words. “This murder is that of the British Linen Company's porter, a man called Begbie.”

He had just got so far, when a rap at the door claimed attention. The servant entered, and put a letter into the hands of Mr Gilmour, saying that the bearer waited an answer. The letter was opened, and glanced over with an anxious eye. “It is from Barbara,” he said. “She writes,” (reading,) “‘Bill has terrified me. He hasna opened his mouth, either to eat or speak, since you left. Having work to do in the kitchen, I

left him for a little to himsel'; but, hearing some noise, I hurried to the parlour—and what think ye? The callant had the parrot's cage off the end o' the rope—the rope doubled to make it stronger, a kinch cast upon it—and actually the daft laddie was standing on a chair wi' his head in the noose, ready to throw himself aff, when I fortunately entered and saved him. He was just hovering to throw himsel' into eternity. Haud hame; I kenna what to do wi' him; but this I ken, that he has dune some awfu' deed; and, just to be plain, I fear it's that very business they've been roaring a' day in the streets o' Musselburgh about.'

"Why, I like that least of anything I have yet heard," continued the uncle; "not that I think a boy will hang himself sooner than an old man, with the experience of the hollowness and vain ways of the world, but that, from my knowledge of him, he's the very last stripling I could have supposed to attempt his own life for a small misdeed. His fights have, as we all know, been endless, and his orchard-robbing, and wild larking of every kind, been beyond parallel; and it would not be consistent with our notions of the nature of men or boys that he would betake himself to suicide for any cause—I am sorry to say—less than murder itself. I am the more inclined to speak out, that I see you, my sister, led by the blind yearning of a mother's love, attempting to beguile yourself into a notion of his innocence. We must not indulge in these thoughts too early, at any rate, because, for the honour of the Gilmours, a family unstained by crime, it is necessary that one carrying their blood should not be hanged in Edinburgh. Meantime, we must keep him out of the authorities' hands, as well as his own."



"What is to be done with him, then?" said the father.

"I may now tell you," continued Mr Gilmour, "that while the officers were with you, I slipped out, for the purpose of despatching Joe to my house, with instructions to Barbara to get him off to her brother's. I suspect, however, the officer will be very soon after him, and my hope is, that Joe's great tact may enable him to baffle the policeman."

"If I had my choice in this unfortunate affair," said the mother, "I would bring my boy to Edinburgh, to face the law, which is always just. It will soon be known over this broad city, that Bill Wilson has fled for the murder of this man Begbie, and we all know how soon flight changes suspicion into a dead certainty. Dinna think me harsh and unmotherly. Heaven knows what love I feel for that boy; yea, strange as it may be, for it is in God's unknown ends, I have loved him while I have mourned for him, the more that he has been rebellious against my advice—his very wildness to others rendering his affection for me something like as if he made me an exception to all the world. But, if you will not consent to see him proved innocent, let me meet him by ourselves. If there's a creature on earth he will open his mind to, it is his mother."

"I fear both plans are unsafe," said the uncle. "The authorities are on the alert. I fear even for a mishap in Musselburgh, at this moment, and I must be on my guard when I get there."

Mr Gilmour departed, leaving the father and mother to the tender mercies of a hope that had no voice for the one, and only, we suspect, gentle, timid whisperings for the other. An hour and a half afterwards brought Joe with the intelligence

that Bill, still sullen and silent, had been removed to William Temple the fisherman's house, and that he, Joe, had seen the officer ride along the main road towards Mr Gilmour's house, just as he emerged from the road leading up from the northern side of Fisherrow. Mr Wilson now considered it prudent to return to his shop and follow his usual avocations. He had more care weighing on him than even those trying scenes, and his apprehensions about the boy, might indicate: he knew the peculiar constitution and temperament of his wife, and feared as much for her as for his son. He had been all along aware that her affection for Bill was something which we, more learned, would call morbid, but which he denominated foolish; and he had no doubt that the conviction of the boy would be equal to a sentence of death to her. Even as it was, and though there might be room for hope, he feared for dangerous consequences. She was of a weakly habit, subject to faintings, which were often induced by the reaction consequent on a certain vigour, which she had the power of calling up to resist the exigencies of misfortune, at the very moment when her internal feelings were wound up to the utmost stretch of her nerves. He had learned to know, that when her lip quivered in the heart of her assumed calmness, the advent of a reaction was at hand.

And, if we must tell the truth, the poor woman, though appearing, as we have said, almost calm in the midst of these doings, had been, for the last hour, "bleeding within." The sight of the bloody shirt had stung her in the very point where all sensation and sensibility centre. The subsequent calmness was only nature's effort in these peculiar constitutions. The reaction was not yet. She was

all the mother, except in that apparent composedness; but the cause that was to be developed in the way feared by her husband, had been deposited invisible to mortal eye, yet as sure to germinate as the sluggish seed in the rich earth. She appeared to bear up during the day. The husband came and went, inquiring for news from Musselburgh. There was none, except the general impression throughout the city, that his son was the murderer. The evening came. It was raw and chill, with occasional flakes of snow driven by a sharp north wind. It was dark at seven, and the darkness was the sign she looked for, without saying a word to her husband. She had tasted no food since the morning, and the hope of her lips was belied by the pallor of a countenance, sweet and gentle as were her thoughts. The servant was out on a message; there was no one to stop her; she sought her bedroom, and taking up a cloak, threw it over her, hurried on her bonnet, and left the house.

Getting to the bottom of the stair, she had the first intimation of the kind of night she was to encounter, in a gust of hard hail in her face. The ground was beginning to be white, and the wind had risen to a shrill whistling through the long closes. She hardly observed these things—Bill was the sole object of her thoughts. She turned down the Canongate, never asking—for as yet she felt no weakness, though she had been confined to the house for a month previously—how her limbs were to carry her. She came to the Palace, passed its south end, got into the Duke's Walk. All the time the drift of snow and hail had been increasing; still she observed nothing of it, excepting occasionally when her slender frame gave way to the force of the wind, and she swerved and stag-

gered to regain her path again on the coming lull. It was not until she had struggled on to a part of the Walk opposite the Hunter's Bog, down which the wind blew much more strongly than elsewhere, that her attention was claimed by the weakness of her limbs—when, indeed, her inability to withstand the impulse of the cold blast, was proved to her by the necessity of saving herself from being overturned by leaning her body on one of the trees which lined the Walk. But what is wind or hail, what lightnings or raining fires, to the yearnings of a mother's heart? Yes, but though these yearnings are infinite, nor yet to be stilled by even disobedience and crime, they are limited in their power over bodily functions. She would feel this by and by: she did not feel it yet. By the time she reached the exit from the park, at Parson's Green gate, the snow had increased considerably; and though not to an extent to be much of an obstacle to strong and healthy travellers, more than enough, when coming on the wings of a strong blast, for her to contend with during any protracted time. What differences may exist amidst assimilated aspects and appearances! That weak and doting woman passed, with limbs that quivered and a body that swerved, strong, muscular men and hardy women. There was no Bill at the end of *their* journey—wild and reckless, and even cruel to all the world besides—to lay his head upon their breast, and groan out the agony of his remorse; to look in their face with eyes of love, perhaps to whisper proofs of his innocence. These thoughts were the opposing forces presented to the harsh features of the night. She passed Jock's Lodge, took the Fishwives' Causeway, and still wrestled with the gusts, still defied the snow—all

with an energy forced from, or, if accorded by physical springs, upon conditions of nature's own choice. By the time she passed Portobello, these conditions began visibly to be enforced. It was cruel; but is not nature cruel when she is called to resent an infringement of her normal laws? Her limbs began to shake even visibly, her head became giddy, a film seemed to gather over her eyes. She leant against a dyke, but for which she would have fallen. She was still conscious; the attack was not the prelude to one of her ordinary faints—the reaction, in that form, had not come yet, for the yearning indicated itself amidst the decaying powers. She recovered a little, but only a little; and now her progress was not what it was. The swerving had given place to slowness, and she dragged her limbs, rather than being carried forward by them.

It was not to be expected that this unequal contest could last a half hour more, yet that time would take her to Bill. "Oh," she thought, "if that boy only knew where I am, under what difficulties striving, under what agonies crucified, under what hopes inspired, his bloody hand would be soft as thistle-down, his wild eye as meek as the dove's, his tumultuous, revengeful heart thrilled with a son's affection." This was not to be; and even as the thoughts careered through her brain, the energies died and died away apace. When about half-way between Portobello and Fisherrow, she fell amidst the snow, now several inches deep, and though fully conscious and warm with aspirations, she could not summon strength even to rise and stand. The spot where she fell was close by a hedge, to which she had turned for support as her powers left her; and this was also one of the



misfortunes of her journey, for the people passing and repassing on the opposite footpath, blinded as they were with the flakes of snow, never turned their heads in the direction where she lay. How long she lay there will appear when we say that about half-past eight Mr Wilson was told by his servant, that her mistress had gone out about seven, and had not returned. On receiving this intelligence, he instinctively went to the shop door, looked out, and observed the character of the night. He said nothing to the servant, only observing she might go home; but his thoughts were busy. It is only the experience of a life that can enable us to understand a human being, and to calculate the probability of actions in given circumstances. Nor is the conclusion anything like a process of reasoning, it is a sudden conviction derived from a chain of reminiscences, rising like a line of electric lights, and retraced by the judgment with a rapidity shaming our distributions of time. He knew in a moment she had gone for Fisherrow, and leaving Joe to shut up the shop, he hurried home, threw on a greatcoat, and in two minutes more was on the way to Musselburgh. A rough, though honest man, he was, in temperament, the very opposite of his wife. He could thrash Bill, and love him well enough; he could correct his wife, and fondle her as a good husband ought; but a stranger to enthusiasm, and its images of delight and pain, he could not read the records of man's genius, as recorded in the poetical actions of life: as for the weather, he viewed all meteorological beauties as pleasant playthings, and their aggressions in the form of hail or wind as the caperings and escapades of a heifer, which he could silence with the blow of his killing-axe.

So on he went, yet not without thoughts and feelings which, if described to him in set rhetoric, he would have despised. He knew his wife's weakness, and his eye, as it surveyed the side parts of the road, showed that he suspected the very fate under which at that moment she was suffering. An hour and a quarter had passed, and he drew near the term of her journey of love. He was surprised that she had got so far on, and began to hope she had reached her destination, when, all at once, he came upon her, as she lay still and motionless among the snow. The sensitive touches of even stolidity are pleasant to us in proportion as they recede in their demonstrations from the poetic spasms of over-refined sensibility. We always hanker after nature in her natural conditions. The rough heart melted, the stern, resistive eye was filled, the hand that slew shook as he took hers, stiff and cold, and pressed it.

"Mary!" he cried. "God! is this the end of our long life of affection! Speak, look up."

"Is that you, Gabriel?"

"The same," he answered. "And you are here for that cursed"——

"Say not a word against him. Help me, I am dying. But, Gabriel, tell me if, for one moment, I could see Bill."

"You shall," replied he, as he lifted the light burden into his arms, clutching her, and feeling her cold body all over, and kissing her stiff frozen lips. "You shall."

And he hurried along, estimating her weight as nothing. He felt as if he could, with nerves raised by affection to the strength of a Titan, carry her miles, over rivers and mountains, to a place of refuge. Nor did he slacken his pace till he reached

Mr Gilmour's door. The rap of his foot brought Barbara on the instant, and one more sufficed to bring him into the comfortable parlour, where a fire burned with a gleam in which his eye leapt. A few words sufficed for information and explanation. A bed was warmed, and Mrs Wilson placed in it, hot drinks prepared, and gentle soothing words whispered to wile the spirit again into hope.

Neither her husband nor her brother felt any apprehension tending to disquiet them in regard to the ultimate fate of this fond mother. They looked simply to the effects of the exposure to cold, and thought that the return of heat to the body, and the application of cordials, would bring her round to her ordinary health. The doctor, next day, felt himself called upon to disabuse them of this fond theory. He was soon made aware of the circumstances which led to her journey, and saw, from the condition of his patient, that a moral ill, deep sunk into her heart, had paralysed the fountain of life, and the superinduction of the cold acted in a manner which defied all prognosis. Every hour, after she went to bed, added to her depression, and at length she was pronounced almost hopeless. Meanwhile, her thoughts were still directed to her boy, who had been the cause of all. She called for him, and as often declared him innocent; but it was thought unsafe to bring him before her, though if her husband had been made acquainted with the danger into which she was likely to be precipitated, he would have run all risks to gratify her in her one great heartfelt desire.

More than once, during her illness, Mr Gilmour went at midnight to William Temple's, and saw

his charge. He tried every means to get him to divulge his secret—even told him he would make him his heir to all his property, provided he was innocent; but the same silence and sullenness repaid his pains. The mention of his mother's illness startled him, and seemed half to resolve his stern determination. He threw a wild look at the uncle, placed his hand upon his face and sobbed bitterly. The only tender chord in his entire mental constitution was touched, but the response terrified him rather than softened him, and still he resisted questions. After Mr Gilmour went away, dejected, spiritless, the boy became, from hour to hour, more restless, and seemed to be shaken in his resolution not to divulge. Every hour he questioned Temple if he knew how his mother was; and when, at length he was told she was dangerous, he fell upon the floor in a fit of agony—yet, even in this worst hour of his suffering, he would not yield to Temple's solicitation that he should tell the truth. It seemed, indeed, that from the hour he heard cried the murder of Begbie, all doubt left him as to his being the individual that perpetrated it, and the thought that his mother should look upon him as a murderer, closed up the issues of confession.

Some new light had, in the meantime, come to the authorities as to the particular case of Begbie, though the evidence against Bill amounted to something like proof of some crime of equal enormity. Even from the beginning, they had ascertained that the knife by which Begbie was killed was left sticking under the fifth rib. The man had been an adept in his trade; he knew the exact place where to hit, struck with decision, and not only left the knife to prevent effusion of blood, but

the round piece of pasteboard which, fixed on the handle, was intended to prevent what blood came from reaching his hand. He was seen last to issue from the close with the bank bag in his hand; and his appearance, as described, by no means coincided with that of a boy. But still there was the mystery to clear up as to the shirt found on Leith Sands, the knife, and the flight of the boy—a mystery which threatened to baffle the authorities; and though they suspected that two murders had been committed that night, they could discover no trace of one of the missing victims.

On the morning of the fourth day after Mrs Wilson's illness, a change for the better became apparent, and Mr Gilmour was almost resolved—especially as he could discover no spies hanging about—to confirm the auspices of returning health, by secretly introducing Bill, at midnight, into the sick-chamber. But then there was the determination of the boy not to see the mother, first to be overcome; and next, the consequences that might result from the interview might have the effect of throwing the mother back—nay, she might, by the wonderful power she exercised over his affections, have wiled from him his crime, in details even more hideous than their worst construction had yet presented it to her. It was in the hour of this uncertainty, entertained both by the husband and the uncle, that Joe White was seen approaching the door, with an inflamed eye and other tokens of excitement. There was a woman with him.

"What now?" said Mr Gilmour, as he saw from the window. "Another surprise. I tremble for his first words."

"Joe is blythe," said the flesher. "No common event could move that face in such a way."



Joe actually tumbled into the room, dragging with him Jenny Morison.

"Here's a woman wha kens the hail story," he shouted; "it's a' richt noo, and Bill is innocent. I kent the laddie couldna kill a human creature nae mair than mysel', though never man knocked doun a heifer wi' mair pleasure."

"Peace!" said Mr Gilmour. "Who are you?" addressing the woman—"but stay, have you good or ill news for us?"

"Oh, gude, gude—or maybe I wadna be here; I dinna like to carry ill tidings."

"Then come with me," he continued; and, followed by Mr Wilson, he led Jenny into the bedroom quietly, and set her on a chair. Barbara was in the room, and Mr Gilmour whispered in her ear, to tell her patient that a woman had come with good news from Edinburgh.

"Ye're a' mad!" said Barbara, with bated breath, but fierce gesticulation, as she stood before the curtains. "Awa', awa';" and, taking the woman Jenny by the arm, she led her out. And, "Awa' you too," she added, as she pushed her master out. "She is in a turning sleep; and wauken her, either to joy or sorrow, and ye've an equal chance o' killing her. What fules men are in a sick-room!"

And Barbara was right. Jenny was taken into the parlour; and there having got her mouth oiled with a glass of brandy, though already bursting to speak, she recounted all the circumstances of that night when Bill slept in her cellar; how she went in on the morning and found him gone—how she wondered at the bed soaked with blood—how she flew up to the Mortimers above, and told them that a callant had cut his throat in her room,

and then ran away to die somewhere else—how the Mortimers laughed as she spoke, and how she cursed them for unfeeling wretches, till she saw on the floor a dead sheep, lying in its own blood, which was sipping through between the planks.

"Ay, sirs," she added, "the Mortimers are sheep-stealers; and when they saw that I had discovered them, they winked, and gave me a dram to bribe me not to tell that the callant had stuck the puir beast wi' a knife driven up into its body."

"A sheep!" ejaculated Mr Gilmour.

"A sheep!" responded the flesher.

"Ay, a sheep," roared Joe; "and what's mair, ane o' our ain gimmers that I brought in frae Prestonfield the very day before. Do ye no mind o' the pen being robbed o' three that night Bill disappeared?"

"Yes," replied the butcher; "and we suspected the Mortimers as old hands."

Jenny, with a pound put into her hands by Mr Gilmour, and relieved of her secret, departed, happier than she had been for many a day. Joe followed her to overtake her, and keep her out of the public-houses by the way. Some time afterwards, and towards the afternoon, Barbara whispered into the ear of her patient, that news had come from Edinburgh that Bill was innocent. The eye of the mother lighted as if by a sudden gleam, then became suffused with tears; sobs relieved the charged heart, and mutterings of prayer moved the white lips. Further on in the evening she was deemed fit for the recital, and Bill was sent for. The story was recounted by Mr Gilmour at the bedside of the patient, and corro-

borated in every circumstance by Bill himself, who, clasped in the arms of the fond mother, wept and sobbed, and promised to amend his ways, and be good.

"And a' this," said Barbara, holding up her hands, "has been aboot the killing o' a sheep!"

ALEX. LEIGHTON.

Bill himself,  
mother, wept  
his ways, and

ling up her  
a sheep!"  
LEIGHTON.

## An Old Reefer's Yarn.

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"COME, spin us a yarn, Jack, my boy," said a curly-headed, rosy-cheeked young midshipman, to old Jack Palmer, one evening, as we were running down the Spanish Main, before as sweet a breeze as ever filled a topgallant-sail. Jack Palmer was an old sea-dog, and a clever fellow, at least in the Yankee sense of the word. He had seen all sorts of service, and knew all sorts of stories, which were perhaps not the less amusing for their want of grammar, and their abundance of sea phrases. He was master's mate of the gun-deck; but when called upon for a story by Rosy Willy, (the name of the little reefer that had asked Jack for a yarn,) his business for the day was finished; the grog had been served; the bull stowed away in the spirit-room, and the key of the hatch returned to the master. It was a pleasant evening, too, and as it was only three bells of the second dog-watch, and of course too early to turn in, Jack sat down on the fore-castle chest, and signified his willingness to comply. He was immediately surrounded by a knot of midshipmen, eager to listen, and, after the usual preliminary of a fresh quid, he began as follows:—

Merriville Terry, or as they used to call him for shortness, Merry Terry—and a right good name it was, for he was as gay a lark as ever gave life and animation to a steerage mess-table—was one of the noblest middies that I ever knew. He was as full of rigs and jokes as a French man-of-war is of music, and they were quite as harmless, too ; for Merry never said anything to hurt a shipmate's feelings, and no one ever thought of getting angry at his fun. There wasn't a reefer in the whole fleet that didn't love him like a brother ; nor a luff, that when there was hard duty to do, didn't favour him all he could ; for Merry had a delicate constitution, and couldn't stand the rough and tumble of the sarvice as well as some. But he was no skulk, and, blow high or blow low, Merry never shrank from his watch. When the relief was called at night, whether it was calm or storm, all sail or a close-reefed top-sail and fore-sail, it made no difference, on deck he always was before the sound would be out of the bell. He didn't tumble up the hatchway either, as some of you reefers do, with your hands in your pockets, and your bow ports half shut, or fumbling at your button-holes, like a green-horn at a gasket ; but up he sprang, wide awake, and rigged from clue to earing, as if all dressed to go ashore on liberty. As I said afore, everybody from stem to stern, liked Merry Terry, or for the matter of that, from one end of the navy list to the other—all except one man. As for the sailors, it would have done your heart good to see how they watched his eye when he had charge of the deck, as if they wanted to spell out his orders before he had time to speak 'em. They would do more for a single look of Merry, than for all the curses and oaths of the



skipper, though backed by the boatswain's mate, with the cat in his hand. It wasn't from any fear of him you may be sure, for I don't believe Merry ever stopped a man's grog, or as much as gave him a cross word, in his life; but it was from pure love and respect. When he spoke, to be sure, there was something in his tone and manner that seemed to say he must be obeyed; and when he looked at a man who had been cutting up rustics, though he didn't frown, or swell, or try to look big, as I have seen some officers do, yet there was that in his eye that made the stoutest quail. It was just so among the reefers at the mess-table. If two of them was sky-larking, or quarrelling, or doing anything ungentlemanly, Merry would just look at them, and they would leave off at once, and droop their heads like a dog-vane in a calm. I said everybody loved him. I remember once, when we were beating up the Straits with a Levanter dead a-head, and blowing so heavy it almost took the very buttons off our jackets, that Merry, somehow or other, happened to fall overboard. He had been standing on the taffrail, with his quadrant in his hand, trying to get a chance at a lunar, when all of a sudden the old hulk made a heavy lee-lurch, and away he went splash into the water. Though there was a sea running, like so many mountains chasing each other, yet before you could say Jack Robinson no less than four stout fellows were overboard after him. It liked to have gone hard with the whole five, for it was more than the stoutest swimmer could do to keep his head above board, and before we could clear away the stern boat, though we didn't stop to cast off the gripes, but cut and slashed away, they was almost out of sight to leeward. Old Tom Bowman, the

quarter-gunner, and Bill Williams, the captain of the fo'castle, made out to reach Merry just as he was going down the last time; and though it was as much as their own lives were worth, they held him up till the boat came to their assistance. I well remember the joy of all hands when the boat pulled up under the stern, near enough for 'em to see that Merry was in it; and when they hooked on the tackles, I don't b'lieve that ever a ship's crew ran away with the falls with as much good will, as ours did that evening in running up the jolly-boat that had saved Merry Terry.

The day Merry first came aboard our craft is as fresh in my mind as it was yesterday, and a snug, trim-built little fellow he was, too, as ever broke a biscuit, or went coxswain of a captain's gig. He was then about as old as Rosy Willy here, and much such another; only he was tauter built and broader in the bows, and carried sail more man-of-war fashion. His eye was as blue as the sea in the tropics, and as bright as the tropic sea sometimes is at night, when it seems all on fire. His head was covered with dark hair, that lay as thick and close as the nap on this monkey-jacket; and his skin was so white and soft, that it always seemed a pity when I saw him standing his watch in the heat of the sun, and his plump little cheeks looking as red as if the blood was going to start right through them. However, he didn't mind it the value of a scupper nail, and I don't know but it did him good, for he grew handsomer as he got a little tanned, and seemed never happier than when he was on duty. He was a little green at first, of course, but there was no such thing as getting the weathergage of Merry, for as sure as an old reefer tried to run a rig on him, he would

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just cock up his bright blue eye, and see what the other was up to in the turn of a glass.

It was a long cruise that we were together, and Merry got to be as much of a man in size and appearance as any of us, before it was over, though he couldn't have been more than eighteen then. On our arrival in New York the most of the mid-dies got their walking papers as soon as they could, and made sail each for his home. Merry's connexions, who were of Irish descent, lived in Virginia, and it was that way he laid his course, you may be sure. I remember very well the morning when I had the third cutter called away and manned for him; and as we wrung each other's hand at the gangway, neither of us had voice enough to say good-bye. My stomach felt all that day as empty as a midshipman's locker, and the ship seemed as lonesome to me as the old brig *Nancy* did once, when all hands died off of the yellow fever, and left me and the old tom-cat the only living souls aboard of her.

For about two years after Merriville and me parted, I lost the run of my old shipmate. He continued ashore, but I soon got tired of being cooped up in narrow streets with no chance of seeing more of the sky than chose to shine between the tops of the dingy houses. Happening to hear that some of my acquaintances were going aboard a ship then fitting out at Boston, I applied for orders myself, and was soon once more where I had a little sea-room to ware and haul upon. That was a short cruise, and by the time twenty months were up we were all home again, the crew discharged, and I, with my hands in my becket, spinning street yarn, and having nothing in the world to do.

The next ship I was ordered to was my own name-sake, old *Jack Adams*; she was lying in Hampton Roads, ready for sea. The first man I met, as I went up the accommodation-ladder, was Merry Terry himself, who stood upon the gangway-sill to receive me. I knew him at a glance, though he was a good deal altered; and he knew me, too, as soon as his eye rested on my face. Merry was by this time about twenty years of age, or thereabouts, and a finer-looking fellow never trod the quarter-deck. He had lately lost both his parents, and this had given a sort of sad expression to his countenance that made him appear handsomer than ever. I soon found that he was the general favourite on board the ship, as indeed he always was, go where he would; and it was expected that before we sailed he would get his parchment from Washington, and mount a swab. An elegant luff he would have made, too, for if ever man knew how to work a ship, it was Merry Terry. When he had the deck, the old craft herself seemed to know it; and no matter what kind of weather we had, she was sure to behave as obedient as a side-boy. I have seen him put her in stays where there wasn't a breaker of water to spare, with rocks both a-head and a-stern, and the wind whizzing round and round, like a bee in a bucket of tar. But when it was "helm's a-lee," and Merry had the trumpet, there was no such thing as missing stays.

I mind I told you a while ago that everybody liked Merry Terry, except one man—that man was the skipper. Somehow or other he hated him worse than the devil hates a marine. He used to ride him down like a main tack, would row him on all occasions, and put him on all sorts of disagreeable duty. It was even thought he had clapped a

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stopper on his promotion. The story among the reefers went that Merry had come athwart captain's hawse in some love affair ; but whether that was so or not was mere dead reckoning, for Merry was as close as an oyster, and never spoke a disrespectful word of his commander. In return for all the abuse he received, he would only curl his lip a little, and look at him dead in the eyes—but such a look as he would sometimes give him ! I would rather, for my part, have been on short allowance of grog for a month. Well, things went on in this way for some weeks, till at last sailing orders were given out, and of course there was no more going ashore for the middies. The boats were run up and stowed, the pole to' gallant masts struck, and storm stumps sent up in their place ; all hands were called to unmoor, and we even hove short, so as to be ready to trip and be off, whenever word should come from the cabin to that effect. When all this was done, the captain sent up an order to have his gig lowered away and manned, and directly after came on deck himself in a full rig of citizen's togs. Merry Terry stood in the gangway, leaning over the hammock cloth, when he heard the boatswain's mate pipe away the gigs, and as the familiar sound struck his ear, I noticed that he started and turned pale. It was a glorious night—much such an evening as this, only later, about two or three bells in the first watch, I think. As the captain passed over the gangway he gave a peculiar kind of a look at Merry—something like what a monkey would at a marine after stealing his pipe-clay—and then turning round to the first luff, he said—“ Remember, Mr Orlop, that you are under sailing-orders, and that no one must leave the ship on any pretence.” As he spoke



this he turned another malicious glance at Merry out of the corner of his eye, and jumping into the stern sheets of the gig, ordered the men to let fall and give way.

As long as the sound of the oars in the rowlocks could be heard, Merry stood as still as a stock-fish, his eye following the wake of the boat till it was lost in the haze of distance. When he could neither hear nor see it any longer, he began to walk about as wild as the devil in a gale of wind ; and the reefers, who would gladly have done anything they could to soothe him, saw clear enough that it wasn't a matter for them to meddle with. In the midst of his agitation, a shore-boat came alongside, the waterman in which handed a note up to the middy that went to the gangway to receive it, and immediately shoved off again. The note, of course, was given to the officer of the deck, according to man-of-war fashion, and he being a stately, pompous sort of fellow, took his own time to send one of the side-boys for a lantern. When the glim came up, he walked to the fife-rail, and looking at the superscription discovered that the note was for Merry Terry. The latter, on learning this, eagerly extended his hand for it, and tearing it open, rapidly devoured the contents ; then rushing to the gangway, he would have sprung into the shore-boat which he hoped was still alongside ; but during the officer of the deck's delay it had already got far beyond hailing distance. Three or four times Merry paced up and down the deck in violent agitation, his lip as white and quivering as a jib in the wind, and his eyes shining like the top-glim of a commodore's ship. All at once he walked right up to the first luff, who was standing abaft, leaning on the taffrail, and in a voice that

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seemed to come from the cable-tier, it was so hoarse and deep, he said, " Mr Orlop, I must go ashore to-night." " You cannot, Mr Terry, you heard the captain's orders." " Damn the captain !" (It was the first word I ever heard Merry swear, though he and I had been messmates going on five years.) " Mr Terry, you forget yourself !" answered the first luff, in a firm, yet mild tone. " If you use such language, sir, you will force me to a disagreeable exercise of my duty." " I mean no disrespect to you, Mr Orlop," said Merry, partly recollecting himself ; " but I am half distracted. If you will lend me your ear, sir, in a more private part of the ship, I will relate to you what may perhaps change your notions of duty."

Mr Orlop was one of that class of officers, who, to the knowledge and skill of an able seaman, added the feelings and address of a perfect gentleman. He, as well as everybody else on board, had seen, and felt indignant at the treatment Merry received at the captain's hands ; and some of the whispers respecting the cause had also reached him. Perceiving that poor Merry was now uncommonly agitated, and fearing that he might commit some indiscretion which would oblige him to exert unpleasant authority, he readily complied with his request, and led the way to his own state-room.

The conference, whatever was its nature, was of short duration ; but while it lasted, many a curious glance was cast towards the state-room door, and—I'm most ashamed to own it—many a listening ear was inclined towards the bulk-head. There was little satisfaction got that way, howsoever, for nothing was heard but a low, humming sound, now and then broken by a muttered curse

in Mr Orlop's voice ; and terminated at last by a sudden exclamation of that gentleman, loud enough for the whole steerage, and birth-deck into the bargain to hear. "Enough, Mr Terry, enough !" cried he. "You shall have it—if it costs me my commission, you shall have it ! There is a point where obedience becomes a crime—when military discipline conflicts with the principles of honour. I will be the first to set an example of insubordination."

As he spoke thus, the door of the state-room was thrown violently open, and the two officers issued suddenly to view. The cheek and lips of Merry were still pale and quivering while the face of the other was flushed with a deep red. They both ran rapidly up the companion-ladder, Mr Orlop, at the same moment, calling out to me—"Mr Palmer," said he, "call the boatswain, and order him to get out the first cutter immediately. Do you attend yourself, sir, on the birth-deck, and start up all the men !"

By this time, his foot was on the top-step of the ladder. As soon as his head was fairly above the combings of the hatch, he began again—"Boatswain's mate !" "Sir !" sung out old Reuben James, in his peculiar drawl. "Call away the first cutters, and do you stand by and see to getting up the yard-tackles—Captain of the fo'castle, there !" "Sir !" bawled the captain of both starboard and larboard watch, at once, startled at the loud earnestness of the first lieutenant's voice. "Lay aloft, and stand by to get your yard-tackles on the fore-yard !—Quarter gunners, do you hear ? do you do the same on the main !—Foretop, there ! out on the yard with you, and send down a whip for the yard-tackle block !" "Ay, ay, sir !" promptly

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responded a voice from the foretop; and with these and similar orders and replies, intermixed with the shrill pipings of the boatswain and his mates, the spar-deck now resounded for several minutes. By the end of that time the cutter was hoisted out, and brought to at the gangway. She was no sooner there than Merry Terry sprang down the side, and the crew after, who, though they wondered as much as all the rest of us, officers and men, how all this was going to end, yet seeing they would oblige their favourite by moving lively, shoved off and had up their oars in the crossing of a royal.

"Mr Terry," cried the first lieutenant, "remember your word of honour that you will return to-night, provided you find or make all safe!"

"Upon my honour," answered Merry, laying his hand on his heart; then turning quickly to the men, "Give way!" and as long as we could hear him, he kept saying, every now and then, "Give way, my hearties."

And they did give way too. They were a set of as stout oarsmen as ever manned a frigate's first cutter; but they never showed themselves afore as they did that night. The boat fairly jumped out of the water every clip, and the foam that she dashed off from her bows formed a long white streak in her wake, as bright and dazzling as the trail of a Congreve rocket. You may think it wasn't many minutes before they reached the shore, going at that rate as if the devil had sent 'em an errand. Merry steered her right head on, and never cried, "rowed of all," till she struck the sandy beach with such force that she ran up high and dry, pitching the two bow oarsmen who had got up to fend off, about half a cable's length from

bar. At the first grating of the keel upon the gravel, he leaped ashore, and without stopping to say one word to the men, darted off like a wounded porpoise, running with all speed up the bank. For two or three minutes, the boat's crew looked at each other with their eyes stretched wide open, like the mouth of a dying fish, as much as to say what the devil's all this? At length they began to consult together in a low, grumbling tone, as they were afraid to hear themselves speak, and Bill Williams, who was coxswain of the cutter, was the first to offer a suggestion that met the approval of the rest. "Hang my chain-plates," said he, "only hark how his feet go, clatter-clatter-clatter, as fast as the flopping of a jib-sheet in the wind. I'm feared, my hearties, that Mr Terry's runnin' 'mongst the breakers, and if you'll stay by the boat, I'll give chase—and, if so needs be, lend him a lift."

The proposal of the honest coxswain was relished by all, and he accordingly set off in the same direction that his young officer had taken. But Bill Williams, though he could run about a ship's rigging, like a monkey in mischief, was no match for Merry in a land chase. His sea legs wasn't used to such business, and he went pitching and heaving a-head like a Dutch lugger afore the wind, and seemed, at every step, to be watching for the weather roll.

In the meantime, Merry linked it off like a Baltimore clipper going large. He had proceeded perhaps about a mile from the boat, along the road which he had struck into directly, after leaving the beach, and instead of shortening sail, appeared to be crowding more and more canvas all the time, when, all of a sudden, he luffed up and



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hove to, on hearing the clatter of an approaching carriage. The noise of the wheels sounded nearer and nearer, as they came rattling along over the rough road, and it wasn't long before the quick trampling of the horses' feet, and the clicking of their shoes against the stones, indicated that they were near at hand. The place where Merry had paused was about midway of a steep hill, and if he had chosen a spot it couldn't have been better suited to his purpose. The road, which had been rough and uneven from the first, was at this point broken into deep gullies by recent heavy rains, rendering, apart from the difficulty of the ascent, extreme caution necessary in passing with a vehicle. On one side, a steep wooded bank rose to a considerable height, and on the other, the surface of the ground gradually descended to the water, which was not quite excluded from view by a few scattering trees that occupied the intermediate space. Behind one of these trees, that grew close to the road-side, and threw a deep shadow over it, Merry, gritting and grinding his teeth, crouched down, like a young shark watching for his prey. The carriage had already gained the foot of the hill, and was slowly labouring up, when a deep gruff voice cried out to the driver from within, bidding him drive faster. At the sound of that voice, Merry's eyes fairly flashed fire. The driver, with instinctive obedience, cracked his whip, and was about to make a more effectual application of it, when a figure suddenly sprang from the road-side, and seizing the reins, commanded him to halt! The command, however, was scarcely necessary. The jaded horses had reached a short level stage in the ascent, and not even the sound of the whip had elicited any indication that they

intended shortly to leave it. Merry, with a sailor's quick eye perceiving this favourable circumstance, in an instant was at the side of the carriage, within which a voice of a very different tone from that which last issued thence, was earnestly beseeching succour.

"Help! for Heaven's sake, help! save me from a ruffian!" cried a female in imploring accents. The last words were scarcely articulate, and were uttered with a smothered sound, accompanied with a noise of struggling, as if the ruffian was endeavouring to hold the lady still, and to silence her cries by pressing his hand upon her mouth.

The incentive of this well-known voice seemed hardly wanting to add more fury to the rage of Merriville. Choking with mingled emotions, he called to the ruffian to hold off his hand, and, with an effort of desperate strength, tearing open the door, the fastenings of which he did not understand, he seized the inmate by the collar, and dragged him to the ground.

"Villain!—scoundrell!—ruffian!" he cried, "I have you in the toils, and dearly you shall rue this night's work!"

"Mr Terry!—I command—you shall suffer for this—a court-martial—" and various similar broken ejaculations were uttered by the wretch, who violently struggled to get loose from the strong grasp in which he was held. Merriville, though not of a robust constitution, yet possessed much muscular strength. In the present contest every fibre received tenfold vigour from the energy of the feelings that raged within him, and made him an over-match for the guilty being who writhed within his arms. The faces of both were inflamed and convulsed with mighty passions,

though of a widely and obviously different character; for the rage of the one, though fierce as ten furies, had yet something noble and commanding in it, while that of the other seemed kindled by a demon. The clear, round moon shone down on the occurrence with a silvery brightness, which, while it made every feature of the scene perfectly visible, yet imparted to the pallid faces, glaring eyeballs, and quivering lips of the combatants a more ghastly and terrible expression than they derived from their own wild passions. The captain—for it's useless to tell you that it was he—struggled hard, but was evidently becoming exhausted. In the excess of his emotion he had bitten his lip nearly in twain, and the blood which, in their tossing to and fro, had been smeared over the faces and clothes of both, gave great additional wildness to their appearance.

The female, who by this time had recovered from the swoon into which she fell when the voice of Merriville first reached her ear, now screamed as she saw the blood with which he was profusely stained, and, imagining him to be mortally wounded, she sprang from the carriage, and tottered towards him across the road. A sudden movement of the two combatants, at the same moment, changed their position in such a way as to bring the back of Merriville towards the approaching figure, and at this instant, his antagonist having succeeded in releasing his arm from his grasp, hastily drew a pistol from his pocket, cocked, and fired it. The ball whizzed through the air, only slightly grazing the neck of the intended victim; but a piercing shriek from the lips of the female, heard above the loud report, announced that it had done more fatal execution in another

quarter. As if by mutual consent, both parties ceased from their struggle for a moment, and rushed towards her. She staggered two or three steps forward, mumbled a few scarce audible words, among which the name of Merriville was the only intelligible sound, and fell bleeding to the earth. In the meanwhile the horses which had been scared by the near and loud report of the pistol, pranced suddenly round, and dashing down the hill, were soon lost to sight. Poor Merriville, with a groan of agony which he could not, which he did not seek to repress, bent over the form which lay stretched and pale before him, and raising it partly from the ground, gazed vacantly for a moment in utter unconsciousness of all things else, upon the features of her still lovely face. The ball had passed directly through the heart, from which life had already bubbled out in a crimson tide, though a few darker drops continued to ooze from the livid orifice of the wound. Merriville whispered her name, but she answered not. In vain he leaned his ear to her lips, or bent his eyes upon them, till the hot tearless balls seemed bursting from their sockets—no sound, no motion, made reply. He laid his hand upon her heart—but its pulse was still. He looked into her eyes—but they returned not, as they were wont, an answering look: their light had gone out—the spirit had departed from its house of clay—she was dead, quite dead! As this fact impressed itself upon his brain, a maddening consciousness of the cause seemed slowly to return; his eyes rolled up till the balls were nearly hid, his face became of a livid darkness, and his teeth were clenched together, like those of one in mortal agony. Suddenly starting up, he turned quickly round, and with his

arms extended, and his fingers curved like the talons of an eagle, he sprang wildly towards his guilty commander. The motion seemed to have been anticipated, for the wretch had prepared himself with a second pistol, which, as his antagonist approached, he deliberately aimed at him, and fired. Whether the ball took effect or not, it did not defeat poor Merry's object. He darted like a hungry tiger on the wretch, and with both hands, seizing him round the throat, he dragged him down to the earth. In vain his victim struggled—the sinews of his antagonist seemed hardened into steel. He tried to shriek for aid, but the grasp around his neck choked his utterance, and his words died away in a rattling sound, like the gurgling in the throat of a drowning man. With a strength that seemed supernatural, Merriville raised him from the earth, and dragged him along the road. The struggling of the wretched man grew fainter and fainter, but still an occasional convulsive quivering of the limbs told that he yet lived. His face was almost black, his tongue lolled out of his mouth like a dog's, and his eyes, blood-shot and glassy, were protruded a full inch from their sockets. Blood had started from his nostrils in his mortal agony, and a thick wreath of mingled blood and foam stood upon his lips, which, wide distended, seemed stretched in a horrid laugh.

In silence, and with a strength that seemed more than human, Merriville continued to drag his victim along, till he reached the boat. He had been met by Williams not far from the scene of the first part of the contest, but he appeared not to see him. Williams, on his part, was too much awed to speak. The firing of the pistols had pre-



pared him for some fatal event ; for he had a dim and dark suspicion of the object of Merriville's errand, inasmuch as he had been the bearer of several notes between him and his betrothed ; and had heard also, that his captain was a rejected suitor for the same hand. One glance at the group served to show him the dreadful nature of the burden Merriville dragged along with him : he saw that his commander was already a corpse, and besides, he was too much intimidated by the unnatural lustre of Merriville's eye, by his pallid and unearthly hue, and by his still and terrible bearing, to interrupt the silence with a word. As they approached the boat, Williams waved his hand to the crew, who were anxiously waiting on the beach, and signified by an expressive nod that they must not speak. Silently and sorrowfully they followed their young officer to the water's edge, entered the boat after him, and commenced rowing back to the ship. Poor Terry, still holding the body by the throat, took his seat in the stern sheets, and leaned his head down on the gunnel in such a way that his garments concealed his face. The face of the corpse, however, was exposed in the broad moonlight ; and as the head hung partly over the seat, with its features distorted and bloody, its hair matted with clots of blood and earth, and its glassy eye-balls apparently staring at the men, a superstitious shudder crept over them, which, with all their manhood, they could scarcely repress.

In this way, and in silence, they drew near the ship. The sentinel hailed them ; but no answer was returned. As they came to the gangway, the officer of the deck called Mr Terry by name ; but still no reply. He saw by the terror painted on

the counterances of the crew that something dreadful had occurred, and descended quickly into the boat, where the whole terrible truth was soon ascertained. They were both dead! By the discharge of the second pistol, Merry had been mortally wounded, and his life had oozed away while his hands were still clasped with desperate energy around the throat of his victim. Even after death his fingers did not lose their tenacity. The officer tried to unlock the death-grasp, but without effect; and the two-bodies, locked in an embrace, which, stronger than that of love, had outlasted life, were obliged to be hoisted up together.

Just as Jack Palmer arrived at this part of his yarn, all hands were called to stand by their hammocks, and the bustle incident to that piece of duty put an abrupt end to his story.

WILLIAM LEGGETT.

## Saise, the Riccaree.

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A GLOWING September sun was darting its almost perpendicular rays down upon the broad plantations of cotton and sugar-cane, and the far-spreading swamps and prairies of Louisiana. All nature was reposing, or we might rather say lying weary and powerless, languishing and exhausted, thirsting in every pore for the heavy night-dews which were to refresh earth's parched lips, and to give back to the flowers their fragrance, and to the trees their colouring. A glowing September sun had driven the planter to the interior of his cool dwelling, where, with blinds shut close, and the claret bottle at his side, he lay dreaming in his wicker rocking-chair, killing time by stirring up and down with a long silver spoon the lumps of ice that sparkled like rubies in the wine.

But in the plantations without, exposed to the broiling heat which burned down into their naked shoulders, the negro slaves, men, women, and children, stood in long rows, with large light chip-baskets by their sides, into which they gathered the cotton flakes from the hard pods; while, under the shadow of a not distant tree, leaned the overseer, with his heavy leathern lash in hand, yawning as he overlooked the toiling and scorched

labourers, and at times casting a furtive glance at the piazza of the dwelling which stood not far off, and in which a much more lovely and attractive picture was presented to his gaze.

Ten steps led to the gallery of the proprietor's house, which gallery was overshadowed by lofty China-trees and two fragrant magnolias; climbing white roses wound themselves around the richly-carved pillars till they met the wild vine, which, growing up beneath the shade of the verandah, hung down its full purple branches amidst the rose-buds, as though it would imbibe all their sweetness, and fill its cool clusters with it. Rare tropical and northern plants were placed here and there in this leafy bower, mingling their perfume with that of the luxuriant creepers around.

But flowers and trees were not all that adorned the entrance of the luxuriant dwelling of Mr Beaufort, who was known and esteemed as one of the wealthiest planters on the whole Fausse Rivière. Not flowers and shrubs alone waved to and fro in the scarcely perceptible west wind, which blew from the broad expanse of waters called the "False River." Between the flower and fruit-encircled pillars, and kept in motion by the hand of a little negro child, was suspended a beautifully-woven hammock of various colours, and in it—her small head, bound round with raven hair, leaning upon her round white arm, and her pretty little feet peeping out from under the wide folds of her dress—lay the planter's lovely child, the most charming creole in Louisiana, looking up half thoughtfully, half absently, at the gorgeous display of flowers which were fluttered round and robbed of their honey by many-coloured butterflies and gem-like humming-birds.

Around her lay newly-gathered flowers, great velvet magnolia blossoms, on whose snowy smoothness she had worked names and figures with her needle; and, in addition to these, a few French volumes and some journals were scattered on the hammock and the little table standing near it, showing that Mademoiselle had tried everything, even newspapers, to divert her *ennui*.

And was it to this fair flower that the sunburnt and sinister-looking overseer directed his passionate glances? Did he dare to raise his eyes to the loveliest and richest heiress in the land? No; he knew full well how she hated and shunned him; he knew full well the gulf that yawned between her and one like himself. No, no; he did not wish to languish and aspire—he wished to *attain*; and his eager gaze had fixed itself on another than Gabrielle Beaufort.

Near to her young mistress, holding a broad fan of peacock's feathers in her hand, which she waved not only for the sake of coolness, but to keep away the buzzing swarm of insects around, there leaned upon an easy-chair a young girl almost as lovely, though very unlike her. She was an Indian. The dark bronze hue of the skin, the sparkling eyes, the dazzlingly white teeth—in short, the whole aspect and bearing of the maiden, proclaimed her a daughter of the forests; only the intensely black hair—slightly curled, but very long and tightly braided—seemed to approach that bluish hue which lends such a peculiar charm to the appearance of the young quadroon.

Her slender form was attired in a white airy robe, made after the manner of her race; a girdle worked in pearls confined it round her waist, and formed, together with two strings of coral, one of



which clasped her satin throat, the other her brow, the only ornament worn by this beautiful creature. The moccasins, too, of soft leather, in which her small and finely-shaped feet were encased, bore the marks of the skilful hand of Nedaunis-Ais, (the little daughter,) or Saise, to which Gabrielle had contracted her name.

Exquisitely lovely and bewitching as was the picture made by these two girls, surrounded by a very world of flowers, it was evident that Saise's bosom was agitated by sad and distressing thoughts; and once, alas! turning her small head away that the young lady might not remark it, she wiped off with her slender finger a tear from her long silken eyelashes, and a low sigh escaped her.

But what could it be that thus weighed upon her heart, surrounded as she was by luxury and abundance? Was she thinking of the fate of her race?—of her whole nation driven from the land of their inheritance, almost exterminated by the sword and the fire-water of the white man, doomed to remain in the far west, far from the graves of their ancestors, while one of their daughters was forced to wait upon a descendant of the proud and insolent invaders, although by birth and right, herself the mistress of the territory in which she served? Ah! she would indeed have had good cause to sorrow over this; and the two lovely beings of whom we speak afforded a true, and therefore melancholy picture of the respective conditions of both nations—the conquerors and the conquered. But this was not the reason of her present sadness, nor was it the consciousness of servitude; for Gabrielle treated her rather as a friend than as a dependent. No; it was her separation from her beloved relatives, from whom she had been stolen

by a fiendish stratagem. It was the thought of those who were mourning for her at home that filled her eyes once more; and this time the tear fell, round and heavy, down upon her lap.

Gabrielle noticed it.

"Saise, my darling Saise! what is the matter with you? Why are you always so sad, and why will you not let me know and share your grief?" asked the young creole, in a sympathising voice. "Am I not your friend? and have I not told you all my little plans and cares, and asked for your advice and your help?"

Saise pressed the hand of her mistress, and looked for a few seconds into her clear, true eyes, with a melancholy smile; then her glance fell upon the little negro girl who was rocking the hammock, and Gabrielle, understanding the look, said:—"Go down, child, and count the little chickens that are running about in the court below, but do not come up again till thou canst tell me exactly how many of them there are."

The little round thing opened her mouth wide in a grin of delight, and rapidly ran through the narrow entrance, and down the steps, to fulfil the command of her "missus." Gabrielle looked after her for a moment with a laugh, then turning kindly to her companion, she said:—

"You see, the child is gone; now then, tell me all that grieves you, without reserve. No doubt I shall be able to help you."

"You shall know all," whispered Saise. "And indeed it is well that you should, for if"—she stopped suddenly, and shudderingly hid her face in her hand.

"But, in the name of all that is holy, what is

the matter?" said Gabrielle, anxiously. "I have never before seen you thus."

"Listen, then," said the Indian girl; "in a few words I will unfold all. Young though I am, I have undergone horrible sufferings. I am the only daughter of a Riccaree chief; and a small portion of our race—your nation has almost blotted ours from the earth—had settled just below the Osages, between them and the Cherokees. My father was a friend to white men. He saw that game became more and more scarce, and felt that we were surpassed in knowledge and skill by the pale-faces. He believed that the only security for the small remnant of his people consisted in adopting the manners and customs of their conquerors, in cultivating the fields as they did, and becoming amalgamated with them. Consequently, all white men were welcome in our lodge, and he behaved kindly to all. Only upon one occasion there woke up in him the old, almost extinct warrior's spirit, and that was when a white—a rough bad-hearted man, who had been well received by us, became insolent and forward in his manner to me, and at last dared to assert that I had no right to be so prudish, for that, after all, as my hair proved plainly enough, I was nothing but a little nigger.

"If an arrow had pierced my father, he could not have leapt more suddenly from his seat. He was one of the first warriors of his race; and my mother had been the daughter of a Sioux chief-tain, whom he had carried off during an incursion made by the Riccarees, and subsequently fallen in love with, and taken to wife. The word 'nigger' so wounded his pride, that, carried away by rage,

he tore down the tomahawk from the wall, and hurled it at the head of his guest.

"The white man fell down insensible; but at that very moment my father was penetrated by the painful thought that he had offended against the sacred laws of hospitality. He sprang to the side of the wounded man, examined his wound, and nursed and tended him as a son till he got well again, and was able to leave our settlement.

"But that man was a fiend! the blow he had received filled his heart with hatred and revenge. While he was still with us recovering from his injury, he explored the house and the neighbourhood with a view to carrying out his purpose; and only three nights after he went away, he secretly and treacherously returned with his accomplices.

"They noiselessly surrounded our lodge; felled my old father, who tried to resist them, to the earth; bound and gagged me; lifted me on horseback; and bore me in wild haste to the banks of the great river.

"When I woke out of a long swoon, the darkness of night was around me; I only felt that we were galloping at full speed upon a hard and narrow way, and amidst low bushes, for the horse's hoofs echoed far through the silent desert, and every now and then I felt slender branches brush my face. Whatever might be their purpose towards me, it was evident that my captors either feared pursuit, or were actually pursued, for they hurried on without a check, and never stopped till they had reached a place before agreed upon, where they were met by their infamous accomplices.

"God only knows what became of my old father—I saw him no more; but in his stead appeared

a strange sinister-looking man, who, in my presence, while I still lay bound upon the earth, pretended to conclude the purchase of me—obtained from the villain who had stolen me a written paper—a bill of sale, as the other called it, and then carried off your poor Saise to a canoe, and rowed away with her.

“Helpless, forsaken, lost! I lay at the bottom of the rocking canoe; but all the dangers that threatened me rose in fearful array before my inmost soul.

“I felt that I was entirely in the power of this man, who kept his greedy gaze steadily fixed upon me. I knew that, sold a slave, I had nothing to hope from the mercy of white men, and for the first time the thought of self-destruction shot through my fevered frame.”

“Poor Saise!” said Gabrielle.

“The canoe was one of the ordinary kind, roughly cut out of the trunk of a tree; narrow, and with a round bottom. If I even stirred, I felt it rock, and saw the anxious counter movement of the rower, who tried to keep it evenly balanced; one sudden move—one plunge on my part—it would overturn, and I should be free!

“Scarcely had I taken this resolution when a cold shudder passed like ice through my veins, and in agony and terror I looked up at the white man; but he, who could not but mark the expression of dread in my face, said, with a mocking smile:—‘Don’t fret, my puppet; if you behave prettily, you shall be my little squaw;’ and then he laughed out so loud and fiendishly that he really seemed to me at that moment some evil creature risen out of the abyss. This confirmed my resolve more and more—I would die. I could



only see the banks every now and then, when the canoe swept a little to the right or left; and I now discerned that a long island lay, as it appeared to me, just before us.

"I can swim like a fish, but the manacles with which I was bound denied me all power of motion, and I had therefore no other deliverance to hope for than that which death afforded."

"Poor Saise!"

"I once more addressed my prayer to the Manitu of my people. I looked once more up at the genial sunshine that for me for the last time smiled down, clear and bright, upon the spreading woods. I once more drew in one very long breath of this beautiful world's balmy air; then I closed my eyes and by a sudden impulse threw myself, with all the strength I possessed, against the side of the narrow boat.

"'Stop! we are sinking!' screamed out my tormentor, in deadly terror, and tried to balance the boat by leaning towards the other side; but I rapidly did the same, and, in the next moment, I felt the cool water close over me—the canoe had upset.

"I did not know whether the white man could swim or not; if he could, he would have been able to draw me, whose hands were still bound, to the shore, which was not far off; but never should he touch me again living, and I dived with the firm resolve of not returning to the surface.

"God willed otherwise. Lifted up by the strong flood, I once more rose to the light, and in rising felt my head strike against some obstacle. At first I thought it was the canoe; but I soon discovered that I had got amongst driftwood, and was so placed as not only to have something

stand upon ; but the trunks, in the wild confusion in which they lay, actually left a small opening through which I could raise my head and—breathe ! For the moment I was saved ; but would not the force of the current, which was roaring and foaming over the branches a short way from where I was, soon force this weak shelter from me, and sink me inch by inch into the river's depths ? I had looked a sudden death in the face with unshaken courage, but to die slowly, slowly here—oh ! it was fearful !”

Saise, overpowered by, and shuddering at, the very recollection, once more hid her face between her hands.

“Thou unfortunate child !” whispered Gabrielle, pressing the lovely girl's brow to her bosom ; “thou dear, unfortunate, naughty child ! and why then hast thou kept all this a secret from me so long—was it right of thee ? But go on, how didst thou escape from such awful peril ?”

“For an hour, an hour at least,” continued Saise, “I remained where I was—for far more terrible than death was the thought of seeing again the light of day, and with it the face of that bad man—before I could make another attempt to save myself. And besides, to get away from where I was was both difficult and dangerous ; for, in the water, I had naturally lost all idea of the right direction to take, and feared that if I dived again I might get carried down deeper under the drift-wood. But God above had protected me hitherto, and I resolved to trust Him further. When, therefore, I found that I could no longer bear it, and that the cold of the water was beginning to benumb my limbs, I listened carefully in which direction the current struck against the branches,

and quickly calculated on which side of the island I should find myself. I then tried to get rid of the bonds by which my hands were held, and I actually succeeded. They were leathern straps, and the water had stretched them; my hands slipped through, and—I felt myself free.

“Now, I had nothing more to fear—the man must have believed me drowned long ago, and have left the place. I dived again, then struck out with all my strength; and, after a few seconds of suspense, which stopped my heart’s beating, I again beheld the precious, beloved light of day. But I did not dare to raise myself long at a time—I did not know how near the man might be. I only crept very quickly and carefully to the flat, sun-lighted bank, and relieved my sorely-oppressed heart by a fervent prayer and a soothing burst of tears.

“All the rest you know. Five days later your father found me in the wood: I was homeless—I did not dare to appear at home again. They had slain my father before my very eyes, and how could the poor remnant of my race guard me from the persecutions of the white men? You, Gabrielle, received me, and in your heart I have found help and protection!”

“But wherefore, then, this constant gloom, dear child?” said the young girl, caressingly; “do be cheerful, as I am. You are with friends who will let no evil befall you; or is there some other sorrow still unspoken?”

“Did you not see this very day,” said Saise, with anxious glances cast all round—“did you not see how they gave up that poor creature to the master from whom—so he said—she had made her escape?”

"But she was a slave, and he her master, dear girl."

"And how do you know that he was her master; did she not swear that she had never seen him in her life?"

"He had the bill of sale, in which her person was accurately described," replied Gabrielle, cheerfully; "you silly child, why do you distress yourself with such melancholy ideas? how shall I ever be able to quiet your fears?"

"He had the bill of sale in which her person was accurately described; and the people here—great God!—they gave her up to him," shrieked the Indian girl, springing from her seat.

"Heaven help me, Saise!" cried Gabrielle, anxiously—for she feared for the reason of her unhappy friend; "what is the matter with you? what do you want?"

"They carried her away bound," continued the girl, in the most extreme excitement; "bound! and about me, about me too, there has been drawn out just such a bill as this: my person, too, my height, my eyes, my hair, even the mole on my shoulder, are all described—oh! merciful God!" Her voice was choked with sobs, and she hid her face in the cushions of the chair near her.

Gabrielle had sprung in terror from her hammock, and now, stooping over the unfortunate girl, tried to still her anguish by words of comfort; but alas! she herself knew too well the danger that, under the circumstances, threatened her, if she were discovered by the villain in question.

"Come," she suddenly said to the Indian, whose sorrow had been in some degree relieved by tears, "come, take courage, I still know a way to help you. You know our friend," continued she, as the

poor girl looked up at her with her large, dark, tearful eyes; "you know the young creole, St Clyde; he feels kindly towards us—towards both of us—you as well as me; and he has even lived a long time on the south-west border of Missouri, between the Cherokees and Osages. He will surely be able to help us; he will either hurry there and bring back witnesses with him, or he will send a messenger who will do so. In that case you must yourself come forward and prosecute the ruffian—that is the only way to escape his claims. Celeste! Celeste!" she then called to her little negro girl who was still busily employed in trying to count the wild little chickens, which kept incessantly changing their places; "Celeste, come up quickly, and send me Endymion."

The little girl obeyed the command, and immediately appeared on the steps; her great dark eyes, however, were full of tears, and her face distorted to an expression of most comic grief.

"What is the matter with you, Celeste?" asked Gabrielle, kindly.

"O missus!" sobbed out the child, whose grief fairly broke out at the good-natured tone in which the question was asked; "O missus—I—I can—cannot count—count—the chick—chickens, they run—hu-hu-hu—they run so fast!"

"Droll child," said Gabrielle, laughing; "go, call Endymion at once, and let the chickens alone."

But Endymion did not need to be called, he passed up from behind his play-fellow, and said, quickly, "Missus wants 'Dymion; here he is."

"Endymion," said Gabrielle, quickly; "you know where Mr St Clyde lives, don't you?"

"Massa Clyde, yes," nodded the little blacky. "but missus, a strange gentleman is below."



"Very well, take him to my father," continued the young creole; "but do you ride off to Mr St Clyde, and beg him to come here as soon as he can—if possible, this very evening. Do you understand, Endymion? this very evening. I—we—we have something important to speak to him about."

"But the stranger, missus?" broke in Endymion, in a tone of anxiety, "the stranger? Massa is asleep, and poor 'Dymion will have many a blow if he is waked."

"Well, then, let him go into the hall and wait; there are plenty of books there, and he may while away the time as well as he can. But do you, Endymion, be quick and get ready my horse at the same time, it may be that we shall soon want him for a long hurried ride; and now go, Endymion, and make haste back."

The full-moon face of the boy now vanished at once down the steep steps, and in a few minutes afterwards, horses' hoofs were heard clattering rapidly along the banks of Fausse Rivière towards the Mississippi.

Meanwhile, Saise comforted herself with the hope just inspired, of being soon beyond the reach of danger. She knew—she might at least confess so much to herself with a gentle blush—she knew that St Clyde would do all that lay in his power to free her from every care and danger; and if she were enabled to come forth herself as prosecutor, that would free him from any suspicion that he might possibly entertain, and enable her to prove beyond doubt the purity of her descent. She took the hand of her friend, raised it gently to her lips, and whispered—"Thou art good and kind—kind as an angel, and hast poured peace and comfort into my heart by thy friendly words."

The two girls had wound their arms around each other, and Gabrielle, as she held the face of the lovely daughter of the woods between her soft hands, looked most lovingly into her large dark eyes, and then pressed a fervent kiss upon her brow.

The overseer, from under his tree, remarked the arrival of the stranger, and sauntered slowly to the house.

"What have those two girls got to chatter about so earnestly to-day?" he muttered to himself. "Deuce take me if I don't wish that little red thing were my own; it's a crying shame that one can't buy red skins as easily as black ones. I wonder who the stranger can be? Very probably a cotton speculator from New Orleans. Well, it is high time that he should come; but for the storm, our cotton would be already shipped off; now he must take the gleaning too."

With these remarks, muttered in a low voice, he walked slowly past the straight rows of negro huts to his master's house, ascended the wooden steps that led to it, and, in the next moment, found himself face to face with the stranger.

"The devil!" cried he in astonishment; "Ritwell! where in the world do you come from?"

"Durm? by all that is wonderful, you here in Louisiana?" replied the one thus addressed, shaking hands with the overseer. "Only think of old friends meeting again in this way! Where was it that we saw each other last?"

"The less we say of that the better," said Durm, laughing; "at least, I for my part have never babbled about the matter."

"Ah! true—I remember," replied Ritwell; "yes, yes, I had almost forgotten the joke, but,

however, it is years ago, and the man has long"—he stopped suddenly, and cast a rapid suspicious side-glance at his companion. "But what are you about now?" said he, changing the subject. "Do you find yourself comfortable here, as the loafers in the kalaboose say?" \*

"I am overseer on the plantation."

"A good business that?"

"Pretty well—it keeps one alive."

"Who is the proprietor?"

"Mr Beaufort."

"How many bales?" †

"A hundred and eighty."

"The deuce!" cried Ritwell in astonishment; "is there no dealing with the man? Why, he must gather gold like moss."

"If you have got any negroes, we want a couple of clever workmen, and a girl in the house, but she must be pretty—the governor cannot stand ugly faces."

"Negroes, hum! well, they are easily procured; how soon must you have them?"

"As soon as possible."

"Does he give good prices?"

"That depends—have you any?"

"Hum! yes—but, apropos, who were the two ladies in the gallery above? the wife and daughter probably, eh?"

"Two ladies? there is only one lady in the house," replied the overseer with scorn; "the other is an Indian girl who has crept in here, heaven

\* A loafer is a vagrant, and the kalaboose the Lock-up in New Orleans.

† A customary inquiry in Louisiana, where the property is so exclusively cotton that the wealth of the proprietor is estimated in this way.

knows how, and yet she is remarkably proud and prudish, the stupid thing."

"Really? but is there no possibility of seeing this Mr Beaufort? I should like to know what sort of a man he is before I deal with him; one can then get on better."

"You will not be able to cheat the Yankee," said Durm, laughing; "but I hear him coming down the stairs. Between ourselves, tickle him up a little about his charming plantations, his noble estates, and so on; you understand me?"

"Thank you, thank you," said the stranger, in a well pleased voice; "I shall not fail."

Mr Beaufort now entered the room, greeted his guest, and bid him a hearty welcome. Ritwell soon engaged him in very interesting conversation, and received an invitation to stay the night, which he was not slow in accepting.

Mr Beaufort, a man of about forty, and, as we have already mentioned, one of the richest planters on the False River, was one of those Southern aristocrats who are wont to divide humankind into three classes only, namely, those who are planters, those who are *not* planters, and *niggers*. The first he subdivided into two sets—those who possessed more, and those who possessed less than fifty bales. He chose his acquaintance from amongst the first set. As for those who were *not* planters, he looked upon them as created only to supply the wants of those who were; and as for the third, the nigger class, he loathed it like a genuine creole. Even the remotest taint in quadroon or mestizo was an abomination to him, and he only tolerated such, in so far as they were useful servants to him. Such, in short, was his horror of the Ethiopian race, that once in New Orleans, he flung his knife at a poor

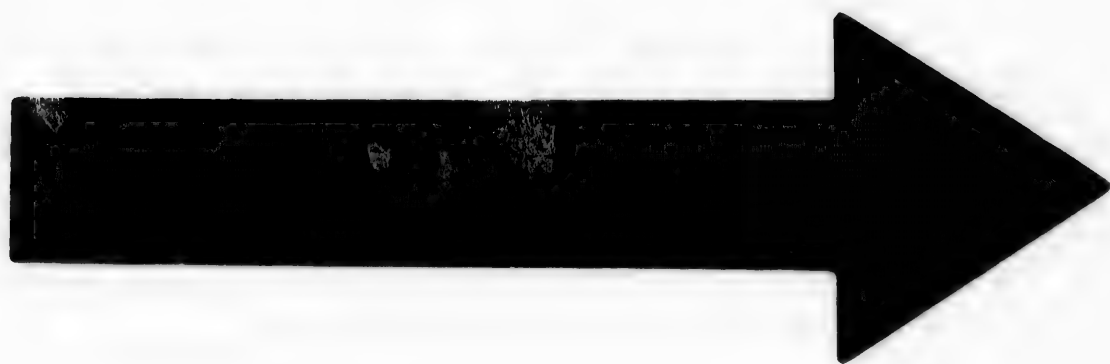
wretch of a mestizo whom he had mistaken in the dark for a creole friend of his, and with whom he had actually walked arm-in-arm through several streets. Fortunately the sharp blade only grazed the man's leg, doing him little further injury than that of terrifying him almost to death.

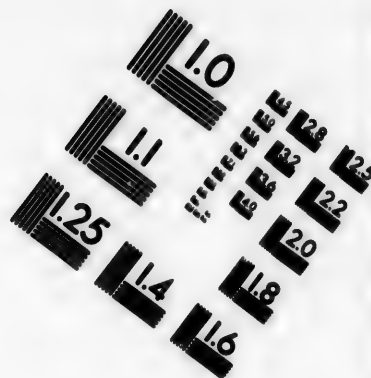
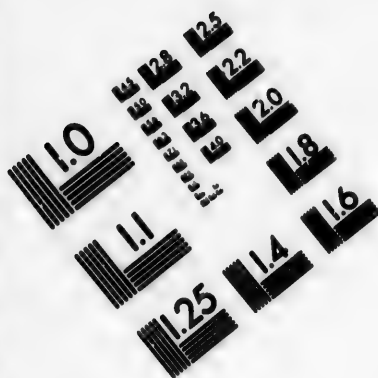
So much for Beaufort's character. His guest, however, as well in outward appearance as in his whole demeanour, contrasted unfavourably enough with the planter. The latter was corpulent, healthy in complexion, and had a fine, open, though somewhat haughty face; the stranger was pale, with gray, piercing, fiery eyes, a high forehead, and a hooked nose; but his expression was bad, his glance restless, and he could not for a moment meet another person's eyes. His conversation, however, was animated; he had seen and experienced much, understood the cotton trade thoroughly, and had himself, according to his own account of it, a not inconsiderable plantation in Alabama.

The supper hour now drew near. The sun was already set, and the table was laid on the piazza up-stairs, for the sake of the cool breeze and the pleasant view over the fields and the neighbouring plantations. The hammock now hung down from one of the pillars; Gabrielle stood near it in a thoughtful attitude, and looked towards the road that led to the Mississippi, and along which she expected to see her messenger return. Saise sat at her feet, lovingly held her hand, which she pressed to her burning cheeks, and her eyes followed the same direction as those of her young mistress and friend.

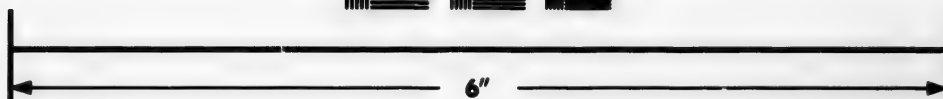
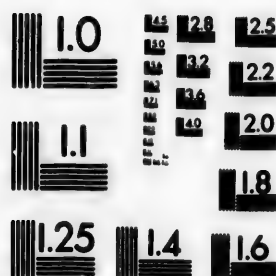
Men's footsteps were now heard coming up the stairs.







# IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (MT-3)



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"He is very merry," whispered Gabrielle.

"Laughing," said Saise, and she suddenly felt that her friend was looking at her fixedly; she did not, however, meet her glance, but caressed her more fondly than before.

"Saise, are you not yet satisfied?" inquired Gabrielle; "is something the matter with you? You have become as red as fire."

"Good evening, ladies!" said the stranger.

"For Heaven's sake, child, what is the matter with you? Your face is as pale as death now!" cried the creole, shocked at the change in her friend's appearance.

"Good evening, children," repeated Mr Beaufort. "Mr Ritwell—my daughter and her friend, a young Indian. But Gabrielle, is Saise sick? what ails the girl?"

"Indeed, I do not know, father; she has got pale so suddenly, and she trembles so in every limb. Saise!"

"Yes," gasped the beautiful girl, rising and turning towards the stranger. For one moment she looked fixedly at him, and then, with a harrowing scream, she fell insensible on the floor. Gabrielle, on whom now the truth flashed quick as lightning, threw her handkerchief over her friend's face—but it was too late; Ritwell, whose attention had been arrested by such strange conduct, sprang forward, scarce knowing what he did, tore the handkerchief away, and called out, in the wildest amazement—"By Jove, my drowned slave!"

"Your *what*?" cried Beaufort, starting forward in equal astonishment; "your *slave*! Why, sir, what do you mean? She is an Indian, and they are not bought and sold."

"It is false!" groaned out Gabrielle in her great distress, while she supported her friend's lifeless form. "It is a fiendish lie; this girl was stolen from her people. An infamous cheat has been practised; Saise is as free as myself; you shall not dare to touch her."

"I reclaim my property," said the stranger, morosely, putting his hand at once into his pocket and taking out a bundle of papers tied up together.

"There," continued he, turning to the planter, "is the bill of sale. Her father was an Indian, it is true, but her mother was a mulatto—only look at her hair. Besides which, to prove I am right, you have not only the fact of her present alarm, but you will find upon her left shoulder the mole here described."

Beaufort rapidly perused the paper, and then stepped towards Saise.

"Back, father, back, for God's sake!" cried Gabrielle in utter anguish; "you must not believe what this man says; it is false. I swear, by all that is sacred, that"——

"Gabrielle," said the father, kindly but firmly, "this is a matter in which you have no further voice. If the mole be *not* found, as I am willing to hope—for the creature would deserve the gallows if, having nigger blood in her veins, she had dared to eat and associate with whites—why, then, this claim is unfounded. If, however, the mole be there, as I live, she shall not remain five minutes longer in my house; you know that I keep my word."

"Father, I implore you by all that is holy! this bill of sale is forged; Saise has told me all about it. She has been stolen away from her home—her father killed—she taken off by force."



"All fables," said Ritwell, smiling and shaking his head; "have you ever, young lady, seen a runaway slave who did not invent an equally credible story?"

"Father, father," prayed Gabrielle, trying to keep him off; but he pushed her away, and said—

"Come, come, I am getting tired of this. I am not going to harm the creature; if she is an Indian, she is as free as myself; but if we find—ha! there it is, Mr Ritwell."

"Stop!" screamed Gabrielle, whose eyes had often and anxiously been turning towards the not distant road; "stop! there comes Mr St Clyde, only wait for his arrival; he will not, he cannot allow this!"

"Mr St Clyde may go to the deuce!" said the planter, angrily; "what has he to do with the right of a stranger? Mr Ritwell, the girl is yours; and she may thank my daughter that she has not a round number of stripes given her into the bargain. Zounds! a nigger audacious enough to deny her origin indeed!"

"We can place her till morning in one of the negro huts," said Ritwell, going up to the still unconscious Saise and laying his hand upon her; "early in the morning"——

Quick steps were now heard ascending the stairs.

"Mr St Clyde, help us!" cried Gabrielle in despair.

At the very moment that she uttered this name, and that the young man appeared at the door, Saise opened her eyes. One glance told her all. For a few seconds she hid her face in her friend's bosom; and then, supported by Gabrielle, rose, and opening wide her large dark eyes, looked wild and shuddering at the circle around her.

"Tell me, for God's sake, what has happened here?" cried St Clyde, springing forward at once to support the trembling girl. "What has happened, Miss Beaufort?"

"Save Saise!" was the reply. "Save Saise from that villain!"

The stranger looked round wildly, and became pale as a corpse.

"Gabrielle," exclaimed her father, "I am sick of all this! Mr St Clyde, let the nigger alone; it does not become a white man"——

"Mr Beaufort!"

"So it is, however; the girl is a runaway slave belonging to this gentleman."

"It is a lie!" suddenly broke in Saise, drawing herself up proudly. The word "nigger" had given her back all her strength and energy. She felt that the moment had now come which she had so long dreaded; but once come, it had lost all its horrors. All her strength of mind had returned, and the Indian spirit of the free daughter of the woods woke within her once more.

But it was in vain that in clear and convincing words she related the whole villainous transaction of the miscreant, who stood before her laughing and shrugging his shoulders; in vain that she called God to witness. She was in Louisiana; a white man had claimed her as a runaway slave; her curly hair spoke against her; and, moreover, there was the bill of sale, and her person minutely described therein.

Was it not only a short time ago that a white girl, with light hair and blue eyes, had been openly put up to auction as the daughter of a mestizo? How much more then an Indian, whose brown skin the American considers as a sign of inferiority

to himself, and esteems little higher than the Ethiopian race !

Poor Gabrielle, finding all her entreaties vain, now wished to purchase her friend from the stranger ; but St Clyde protested against that, and certainly with a warmth that, if it sprang only from humanity, did him great honour.

"No," cried he, "no ; that were to confess that she belongs to that despised race. Pure and free from all such stain shall she be seen to be, if I beg the proofs of it with my life ! Mr Ritwell, you shall not leave this parish till you have cleared yourself from the accusation brought against you."

"Who accuses him ?" asked Beaufort, impetuously ; "who accuses him, sir ? A nigger ! his own slave ! Are you weak enough to imagine that the Court would attend to such an accusation ? You should know the law of the land better than this."

"I myself accuse this man," said St Clyde ; "I myself, and not this unhappy girl, who must not in the meantime be given up to his power."

"You will find it rather difficult to carry your point," retorted Ritwell ; "fortunately I am well acquainted with the course of law. You may indeed accuse me, but you cannot keep back from me my own property meanwhile."

"Sir, you must first prove that she is your own property."

"That is proved, Mr St Clyde," replied Beaufort, coldly. "And now, I shall be much obliged to you if you will occasion no further disturbance."

"Mr Durm," said he, turning to his overseer, who at that moment made his appearance, "be kind enough to take this runaway slave"—and he

pointed to Saise—"to the negro hut below; you will answer to me for her safety."

"Saise!" exclaimed Durm in amazement, scarcely knowing whether to trust his eyes and ears. "Saise a nigger! Well then, the de—"

"Sir!" cried St Clyde, enraged.

"For Heaven's sake," implored Saise, "do not contend against these overpowering present circumstances! Go to the court of justice—they must help me. I claim the protection of the United States; my father gave up his land to them, and they promised to defend him. They may only keep me prisoner till I can send a message to my people: they will all come and witness for me that I am a daughter of their chief. Oh, if my brother only knew!"

"We do not want any Indians for that," said Ritwell, in a mocking tone; "that I can myself certify. But who, pray, was your mother? A mestizo. What else, think you, is stated here? That mestizo belonged to my friend, from whom I bought you; and if he left you for so many years with your father, it was only that you might be brought up there for him: you are not the less his slave."

"My mother was the daughter of a Sioux chief," said Saise, drawing herself up proudly, "and whoever says otherwise *lies*!"

Beaufort's fist now felled the unhappy girl to the ground. "What!" he cried, "will the nigger beast venture again to call a white man a liar in my presence? is it not enough to have deceived and made a fool of me?"

With a cry of revenge on his lips, St Clyde was springing towards him, and would have prevented him saying thus much, but that Gabrielle threw

herself before him, and implored him for the sake of all that he held dear—all that he held holy, to spare her father. But the overseer now interfered, and insolently said to the young man—

“Mr St Clyde, I have now to warn you against speaking any more unnecessary words on this subject. Ma’amselle from this moment is under *my* care; and whoever interferes with my niggers, I just run a foot of cold iron through.” And so speaking, he drew his heavy bowie-knife from out his waistcoat. St Clyde was unarmed; and, moreover, he knew how the law protects overseers if interfered with in the discharge of their office. A short time ago, an Abolitionist had been shot in Ohio for this very thing, without any more unpleasant consequence to the assassin than a quarter of an hour’s examination. Therefore, for the present he must needs yield to force; but he swore that he would yet save Saise, even if it were to cost him his own life.

“Mr Beaufort,” cried he, turning once more to the planter, “you will at least guarantee me against the maltreatment of this unhappy girl. I am powerless now to resist their violence: they are responsible for what they do. But the Eternal who hears us is my witness, that from henceforth I constitute myself Saise’s champion, and the laws of the land must and will support me. Fare you well, Miss Beaufort; and oh! do not forsake the unfortunate; give her at least the comfort of feeling that she is not quite alone in the world.”

Meanwhile, the overseer had beckoned to two negroes who were working near the house to come up, and he now said to them: “Take this girl to Mother Betty’s hut, and do you, Ben, keep watch over her. Remember, your black hide is surety



for her; and you will pay for it with your life if she makes her escape."

"No fear, massa," said the negro, grinning; "but what girl is it? Lor' bless you! I see no girl, only Missus Saise!"

St Clyde rushed down the steps, leaped on his horse, and galloped as hard as he could to the Mississippi. Gabrielle bent down sobbing to the poor girl, and bound her own handkerchief around her bleeding forehead.

Both the negroes stood staring, open-mouthed, first at one, then at the other, and dared not touch the fainting girl till their overseer's repeated command, and the threat of his whip, recalled them to their duty. They then lifted up the poor Indian, and soon disappeared with her in one of the low, uniform negro huts, that, in long regular lines, looking not unlike a little town, surrounded the villa of the proprietor.

Gabrielle retired to her own room. But the men—the overseer was invited on this occasion to dine with his principal—sat down to table, and Beaufort seemed resolved to wash away all anger and annoyance in the well-iced claret; and before he retired to rest, he again thanked the stranger for having freed him and his house from the disgrace of harbouring any "cursed nigger blood."

Mr Ritwell was duly conducted to his sleeping apartment; but the evening air being cool and tempting, as he said, he spent half an hour or so upon the river in the overseer's company, and then walked with him through an alley of China and tulip trees to the entrance of the plantation, which was shaded by a thick orange and fig-tree hedge.

"I say, Ritwell, just tell me," said Durm, suddenly stopping short, and standing still, "have you

been at one of your old tricks, eh? Is the girl really a nigger, or is she not?"

"What's that to you?" muttered Ritwell, looking anxiously around. "Can any one overhear us where we are?"

"Not a soul. But come now, you really must tell me the whole story; I'll be hanged if it has been brought about by fair means. What the plague, man, don't be so mum about it; surely there is no fear of one of us betraying the other?"

"Very well, then, you shall know all; but come first of all into some open place," whispered Ritwell. "I am so uncomfortable under these trees, and cannot divest myself of the idea that somebody is listening to me."

Accordingly, both worthies proceeded to the bank of the Fausse Rivière, and walked arm-in-arm up and down before the plantation. Ritwell now stated the whole case to his friend and accomplice; and also revealed to him that, despite the confident tone he had assumed, he would not stay till that young fop St Clyde could fulfil his threats, but purposed setting out very early the following morning.

"That will suit admirably," said the overseer; "I have just been settled with by Beaufort, and shall probably be able to accompany you if you will remain a day or two longer. A most uncommon bargain may be had of the present gleaning. I am tired of being here on the river; I mean to go to Texas, and to buy my own plantation."

"What! already made your fortune? That's quick work," said the stranger, laughing.

"One must be a fool indeed," replied the over-

seer, with a smile, "if in three years' time he did not lay by a small capital on *such* a plantation as this."

"I would willingly wait for you, if I could," said Ritwell, "but it is impossible; I must set about selling the girl in question. In the first place, I do not feel safe or comfortable here; and then—I have work to do elsewhere. I could not have recovered her at a more opportune time; but the devil only knows how the little creature saved herself from drowning: I saw her sink with my own eyes, and with hands bound into the bargain."

"The Indians can dive and swim like fishes," said Durm. "But do you know, Ritwell, I will buy the little one from you."

"What! you? But that creole"—

"May go to destruction if he likes; I will undertake all risk."

"And if you buy her in the way that I am able to sell her," providently inquired the Yankee, "will you bear the loss if the Indians should happen to come and reclaim her as the daughter of their chief?"

"Yes, certainly I will," said the overseer, in a mocking tone; "but for that very reason I must have her cheap. I will give you two hundred dollars for her."

"Hallo! that's too little; why, remember that she is worth eight hundred."

"Not worth fifty cents if I leave you in the lurch," said Durm, tauntingly.

"Nay, nay, man, two hundred is positively too little; I would rather take my chance; say *three*, and she is yours."

"Done; but come home with me—write me out a bill of sale, and receive the purchase-money."

"And you really think, that without incurring any danger, I may linger on here for a day or so?"

"For a year or so, if you like; let me once have the girl, not all Louisiana shall tear her away from me. In every slave State the laws must needs be upon my side, and there is nothing more dangerous than to oppose them on such a question. Come, Ritwell, in ten minutes the lovely Indian shall belong to me; and to-morrow I shall not fail to assert my claims. Afterwards her whole race may come and swear to her; it's all one to me."

Both the men then hastened to the overseer's house, which stood in the midst of the negro huts, and was only distinguished from them by a higher roof, and by a gallery. There they concluded the business they had agreed upon; Ritwell received the money, and Saise was made over to Durm as his own rightful property. On the following day Beaufort was to add his signature as witness to the transaction.

Meanwhile, St Clyde had so urged on his horse with spur and whip, that when he stopped before the door of the magistrate, in Pointe-Coupée, the poor animal staggered from side to side for a minute or two, and then fell down exhausted. But without deigning to cast a glance at it, the young man flew up the steps, rushed into the magistrate's room, and, in a few words, relating the outrage he had been witness to, called upon him for assistance. The magistrate was a worthy man, rigidly just, as well as humane in the exercise of his functions; but he shook his head thoughtfully as he heard of the regularly executed bill of sale. He well knew the power that such a document possessed.

"Young man," he said, after a long pause, during which he had rested his head upon his hand, and thoughtfully looked at the creole; "this is a

bad case. In the first place, it seems to me that you consider it in rather too romantic a point of view ; but even if it really be as you represent, I do not see in what way it can be remedied, for we cannot act in defiance of the laws, even if firmly persuaded that the poor girl has been wronged."

"But you would not surely concede that it is legal to capture and sell a free Indian?" exclaimed St Clyde, angrily; "why, the same thing might happen to a white, if two rogues were to conspire in writing out a bill of sale about him, and in swearing that his mother was a mestizo."

"That could hardly happen," said the judge, with a smile; "before a white man could be sold, very strong proofs of his being really of negro descent would have to be adduced; but you should not believe all the stories that a runaway slave tells. Good heavens! they often lie to a most tremendous extent."

"But would it not be possible to get the Indian girl out of that man's power, till one could bring forward witnesses from the tribe?"

"My good friend, her tribe lives seven or eight hundred miles away; Mr Beaufort himself has driven them four hundred miles back from the river. Nay, more, might not all people of that kind, Indians and Indian-like, mulattoes and mestizoes, for example, maintain that they have pure Indian blood in their veins, and then try to send off to the Esquimaux for witnesses to the fact? This would never do. Had she witnesses to produce, they would, after all, only be—*Indians*; the best plan were your *buying* the girl, if you really attach the value to her that you seem to do."

"*Buying!*" exclaimed St Clyde, in a voice that shook with anguish; "*buying!* and is she then



really a slave? Is there no possible way of saving the unhappy girl from such degradation?"

"I am afraid that there is *not*; but at all events, this would be the surest way of protecting her for the present. Perhaps that stranger might be prevailed upon to take a part of the purchase-money, and we could then see what further could be done in the matter: what say you to this?"

"Alas! my good magistrate," said the young creole, with a sorrowful sigh, "you know very well that I am *poor*. My only horse has just dropped down, and I have scarcely money enough to buy another. How then could I ever raise the sum that rascal would ask for Saise?"

"Hear me, St Clyde, I will make another proposal to you. I myself will buy the girl, and keep her with me here; when you have got the money—very good—I make her over to you."

"To *buy*, and always to *buy*, and that only!" groaned out the creole.

"Accept my offer," said the magistrate, cordially; "in my house she shall be treated like a daughter."

"Well, then," said St Clyde, "so it must be—it will at least save her for the present—but I will procure witnesses to her free birth, even if I have to fetch them from the icy regions of the north."

"This will not help you much; but if you absolutely must have a messenger to her tribe, I am able, as it happens, to direct you to one. This very morning there have been, in Pointe-Coupée here, seven or eight Indians from the parish of West Feliciana, on the other side of the Mississippi. They were selling venison, and have carried off powder, lead, and whisky in lieu of it."

"Of what tribe were they?"

"Probably they were Chocktaws, of whom there are always a few in this neighbourhood, but first of all let the purchase be properly concluded; for if things really are as you suppose, and the worthy in question have not a very quiet conscience, he will certainly not remain long in these parts, but carry off his booty to some safer place. So, here, just give this paper to Mr Beaufort—he can make the purchase for me; and, as it happens, my wife is now quite alone and already knows the young Indian—they are sure to get on very well together."

"But, my good friend, I must have another horse, can you sell me one?"

"What price do you mean to give?" asked the magistrate; for an American never lets pass an opportunity of a little horse-dealing.

"I have forty dollars left, after deducting what I require for immediate expenses."

"Very good; I will sell you a horse, but it is impossible that you should set out this evening."

"This very moment!"

"Nonsense! you will spoil your own game by your over-fervour. At eight o'clock, old Beaufort has had his quantum of claret, and goes to bed. Now, you know that, first of all, it is an impossibility to keep him awake after that; and even if you could, I should like to see the temper in which he would be! There is no speaking to him before nine o'clock in the morning; and if you set out to-morrow at eight, you will just find him at his breakfast; that is the best time. Moreover, I have requested Beaufort to put off the payment for three days, and to keep Saise meanwhile in his house. Perhaps I may yet succeed in saving her. To-morrow I will speak to Bealty, our

best advocate; if there be any way or means of proving the identity of the chieftain's daughter, he is the man to find it out."

Filled with fresh hope, St Clyde now allowed himself at length to be persuaded by the reasoning of the magistrate to agree to his plan, and to pass the night at his house. On the following morning, as he galloped off with the letter that was to save Saise from the gripe of that rascal, he felt for the first time the full and clear consciousness of how much he loved the young girl, and that for him there was no happiness on earth unless he found it at her side. True, he was poor, and had nothing to depend upon but his own strength and energy; but this daughter of the woods, accustomed to hardships from her infancy, would hardly long to return to the civilised life of the settlements, if he really, as he had some reason to hope and believe, were not indifferent to her. But first she must be free, once more free, as the bird of the air and the deer of the prairie, and her present cause of anxiety must be wholly removed.

As he thought of the poor girl he spurred his good horse to a quicker pace, and flew on cheerfully beneath the tall, shadowing magnolias. At last he reached the settlement of the Fausse Rivière; traversed the little village without once slackening speed; passed plantation after plantation, passed "Pozdras College," and then he saw the lofty shining roof glistening from out the green shrubbery around it. He reached the orange hedge, sprang from his horse, hung its bridle over an old half-withered fig-tree, and rushed up to the room where he knew that Mr Beaufort always breakfasted.

"Hallo! St Clyde," exclaimed he, in a friendly

voice. "It is really good of you to come again, for yesterday I was a little bit cross, I believe—that vile nigger had vexed me so much. Now, sit you down, there is a chair behind you. Scipio, *canaille* that you are, can't you see when a gentleman wants a chair?" he said in a parenthesis to a little negro who was waiting at table.

St Clyde looked anxiously around the room, in which hitherto he had never failed to find Gabrielle and Saise at this hour.

"You are looking for my daughter?" said Beaufort, remarking the young man's glance. "She is not very well this morning—pray excuse her."

"And—and Saise?"

"Listen, St Clyde," said old Beaufort, laying his knife down, "if we are to continue friends do not spoil my breakfast, and let that old story rest. There's an end of Saise."

"An end of her? For God's sake what? Is Saise gone?"

"Not yet; but now do me the pleasure to sit down. The claret is famous, and the beef-steak capital."

"Mr Beaufort, I have got a letter to give you from the magistrate—he earnestly implores you to comply with his request."

"By and by," said Beaufort, pushing the document under his plate without even looking at it; "we will consider it by and by."

"The business is pressing, Mr Beaufort—the happiness of a life depends upon it," said St Clyde, earnestly.

"Well, I shall soon have done," replied Beaufort, half amused and half offended! "but do you suppose that I should let my beef-steak get cold and my claret warm to oblige the whole world?"

What cannot wait till after breakfast let alone altogether—that's my maxim; and now, sit you down, or I shall be really annoyed."

St Clyde saw plainly that no further representations of his would now avail; he therefore took a seat near the planter's, but found it impossible to touch a morsel. He drank a couple of glasses of wine to cool his boiling blood, and then walked restlessly up and down the gallery, which was fragrant with trees and flowers. Meanwhile, Mr Beaufort finished his breakfast in comfort, and at his leisure slowly sipped his last drop of wine, wiped his mouth, leant back in his chair, and said, after a long-drawn breath, "Well then, we will now go down-stairs a little, and see how"—

"But the letter?"

"Ah! just so. I had nearly forgotten it; well, what says the magistrate? 'DEAR FRIEND,—I am much interested—earnestly request—my wife is alone—she heartily wishes to buy Saise—(by Jove! here is that accursed nigger again; nonsense, it's too late)—weighty reasons—to delay giving her up—(nonsense, I say, it's too late)—exceedingly obliged—perfect esteem and friendship,' and so on—well, I am sorry it's too late."

"But you said a short time ago that Saise was not yet gone?—how then can it be too late?"

"My overseer has bought her," replied Beaufort, picking his teeth, "so pray apply to him, and do not harass me with the matter. I am sick of being plagued about the creature."

"But, Mr Beaufort, tell me, for mercy's sake, what has made you so harsh towards this unhappy girl; you used to behave to her more like a father than a stranger?"

"That's the very reason, sir!" cried the old



planter, enraged; "that's the very reason. I have to bear this disgrace before all my niggers. Do not you suppose that the rogues have laughed themselves nearly to death, at the idea of their master sitting down to table so long with one of their own race?"

"But what if Saise be really descended from a pure Indian race, and you, without knowing it, have aided and abetted a fraud?" asked St Clyde, fixing his eyes firmly on the older man; "what if that stranger and his vile companions had, with the help of a magistrate, *forged* that bill of sale, and, through your agency, an unhappy girl, who hitherto has looked upon you as her second father, were consigned to nameless misery!"

Beaufort for a moment looked aghast, but he soon shook his head angrily, and exclaimed—

"Nonsense—folly—to come thus with a whole packet full—but when, and—why, thunder and lightning! sir, let me alone with your lamentations; the girl is sold; I myself have signed the bill of sale; and therefore, 'basta!' go to the overseer, if you are so anxious about it—he will let you have her for an extra fifty dollars. Or, stay, rather go to him in the field, and send him up hither—I have something to say to him."

Beaufort then walked into the next room, and angrily closed the door. But it was no longer with the creole that he was angry, but with himself. For the first time, he began to fear that he might have been too precipitate, too much carried away by his late unexpected provocations. It was true that he could not undo what was already done, but he would, at least, try whether he could not mend the matter a little. He thought he would buy Saise, and then inquire whether she really had

black blood in her veins or not. Till that point was ascertained, he could build her a little hut, so that she need not come into contact with him or his daughter.

An hour later, Durm and Ritwell again stood together on the river's bank.

"Ritwell," said the first, "I do believe that it would be better if we were to set out to-morrow; old Beaufort seems to smoke the matter—he looks grave."

"Has he discovered anything?" asked Ritwell, anxiously.

"It would be no marvel if he had," replied Durm, speaking through his closed teeth; "that young fop was here again just now, and has probably been trying to get round him. Only think, he wanted to buy back the girl from me!"

"Who? Mr Beaufort?"

"Yes; both of them: first the callow bird, and then, when I went to him, the governor himself. While I was speaking to him, he was holding a letter in his hand, and I would lay my life that it was from the magistrate. And since I have got several trifles on the cards here, I do not see exactly why we should linger on any longer. When I refused to sell him the Indian, he got into a rage as usual, and said that I might come to him and finally settle accounts in an hour's time; so I shall avail myself of this opportunity—such a sudden departure may save many an unpleasantness. As for my other affairs, I can arrange them all between this and morning; so keep yourself in readiness, in four days we must be in Texas."

"Good!" said Ritwell, thoughtfully; "but, Durm, we go together, it seems, and I—I have a few friends besides who are waiting for me behind

Fisher's Landing; and you—could you make it convenient to get over the ground rather quickly!"

Durm looked askance at him, and asked, after a short pause, "And pray, may I be informed the reason of this request?"

"If you give me your word of honour that you will say nothing about it," whispered Ritwell, looking cautiously around.

"Do you require my *word of honour* for that?" asked the overseer, with a laugh.

"Well, well, I see you understand me, Durm," continued the Yankee, in a low voice. "I have again a little matter on hand of the same kind that you and I often used to transact. A rich planter on the other side of the Mississippi is glad to send his slaves to Texas, as in Louisiana they are too valuable to other people, and he pays me a hundred dollars a head. Yesterday morning we crossed, below water too, and with the help of two comrades I have brought a hundred and fifty negroes to the swamp that lies between Fisher's Landing and Cutoff. Did you see the three that passed yesterday? They were the last. All alike have false papers. Now, you know all; and, if you are wise, you will not join us alone, but you will take with you two or three companions. Has Beaufort no negroes who find that life in Louisiana no longer suits them? You may say that you would take them to a better climate."

"That's all very good," muttered Durm, looking fixedly before him in deep cogitation; "but, Ritwell, there are two sides to the picture, and one of them is very dark. That we succeed in our undertaking I have not a moment's doubt, for of course you have provided arms; but supposing Texas should annex itself to the United States, as

is everywhere talked about, how would it be then? The government would give us up."

"Good heavens!" said Ritwell, laughing, "if the government were to make a point of giving up all who had gone beyond the law in one way or other, who would then be left to till the ground, to tend the flocks, or to fight against the Mexicans and Cumauches? No, no, Durm, do not trouble your head about that, we are safe for that matter; and the good fellows themselves know that pretty well, or they would never have declared in favour of the annexation."

"I believe you are right," said Durm; "and at all events we should have no difficulty in going further west, where neither Texas nor Uncle Sam would be able to catch us; and if it did come to that, we should have many to support us."

"Seven-eighths of Texas at least," said Ritwell, laughing.

"Very well, so it shall be; but in this case we must set out before daybreak, so as to be all together about ten or eleven o'clock. We need not fear pursuit from this quarter at all events, for Beaufort does not get up so early; and I will arrange matters so as to have it supposed the missing negroes are working elsewhere. But will Saise go with us quietly?"

"What a question for an overseer to ask! Have you not got a whip?"

Durm smiled, and said, with a sneer, "You do not seem to understand how to manage ladies. I have another and a better plan. I will take our little gig and drive; as an apology, I can tell those whom I leave behind to say to the governor—not of course before he asks—that I have taken my things in it to Fisher's Landing, where the boats

always stop. But, deuce take it! I had wanted to spend to-day with my little wife, and now I shall have to run about hither and thither till I hardly know whether I am standing upon my head or my heels. Never mind, I can make up for lost time in Texas. Ha! ha! ha! she won't be angry with me for that."

"Hardly," said Ritwell, drily; "but now to work—have you got any arms?"

"Two rifles, a bowie-knife, and six pistols; you know that an overseer must always turn his house into a fortress."

"Very well, if you take a carriage you can easily bring all those with you—such things are always useful; but here comes the young fop, who makes such a fuss about the Indian, walking down the avenue. The young lady of the house is with him; what is her name?"

"Gabrielle; she is a beautiful creature. It is a pity that you cannot concoct a bill of sale about her; I would gladly take her too."

The Yankee cast a warning glance at him, and then, that he might not be seen with the overseer, went up the river, while Durm saddled his horse and rode out to the fields, where he picked out a certain number of negroes and told them to take their axes to fell wood in a distant part of the forest which he would show them. He soon after disappeared with them in the swamp that surrounded the plantation.

St Clyde and Gabrielle walked near each other towards the river.

"For God's sake, sir!" said the girl, as they approached the outer fence, "what is the matter with you, you are in such a state of excitement? I have never seen you so before."



"I must set out," whispered the young man, pressing his burning brow with his pale hand; "I must go away; I must get help. It is only since this wretched catastrophe that I know how I"—he stopped suddenly, and turned away.

"How you love Saise!" whispered Gabrielle, in a low, hollow voice, and she looked fixedly at the creole; "is it not so, St Clyde? you—you love the Indian?"

"Yes, Miss Beaufort, yes, why should I conceal it from you?" said St Clyde, hurriedly, as he stood still and looked full into the eyes of the poor girl, whose colour had all fled; "why should I shrink from confessing it to you? You were the unhappy one's friend as long as she remained under your protection; you have always been kind and cordial to me, a poor homeless wanderer. I will trust you now, and you will, I am sure, assist me as far as you can."

"Certainly, certainly," said Gabrielle, in a scarcely audible voice; "but—but if Saise were really—were a—a—negro. If—but do, do not be angry with me, I do not know what I am saying; Saise is free—must be free and—happy." She hid her face in her hands, and the clear, pearly drops trickled down through her slender fingers.

"Oh! Miss Beaufort," cried St Clyde, much moved, "you are so kind about the poor girl, how shall I ever be able to thank you?"

Gabrielle controlled herself with all her might. "What would you do? what is your plan?" she rapidly asked. "How do you expect to save Saise, when you yourself tell me that wretch has sold her to Durm, and that the latter has quarrelled with my father? What can you do against these villains, since they have the law on their side?"

"Nothing more through the law," said St Clyde, in a suppressed tone, "everything without it. The magistrate told me yesterday that a body of Chocktaw hunters were encamping upon the Mississippi; they must be my supporters. If I am unable to win them by the hope of saving a daughter of their own race from slavery, if they are so debased that *that* thought even makes no impression upon them, then I have still another and more powerful means of persuasion left, and that is—whisky! A border Indian can be got to commit any villany for the sake of whisky; why not, then, a good action? It is the last resource I have."

"But the danger to which you expose yourself!"

"Danger! what danger can there be when I have only to die? No, Miss Beaufort, I might perhaps have lived without Saise if I had known that she was happy, but with the feeling that she, sold into the most horrible ruin, was languishing in shameful bonds—that she, the free daughter of the forests, was a slave! no, no, life would be madness thus. But I must set out, precious time is flying; Durm has quarrelled with your father—the whole settlement is speaking of the way in which he has cheated him and made a fortune during the short time that he has been here. He will not, we may be sure, be slow in getting it all safely off, and if once he take ship, say to New Orleans, it would be impossible ever to find him again in that vast city. But this is my request—Will you receive Saise?"

"How can I?" replied Gabrielle, with hands clasped in her anguish; "is she not Durm's property?"

"I know that; but you have much influence

with your father, and even over that ruffian you exercise the power that virtue gives over vice ; you inspire that fear which the bad cannot conquer when in the presence of the good. Do insist that Saise be not given up to him to-day ; or, if you cannot prevent that, that she pass the night under your protection, or at least under that of the old negress with whom she now is."

" You mean to carry her off ?" asked Gabrielle, bewildered.

" No," said St Clyde, gloomily ; " her bill of sale is in that villain's hands—that thought would always be enough to make Saise wretched ; no—I must have that document in my power—if the laws will not support me, God will. Only promise that you will protect Saise till then."

" Yes," whispered Gabrielle, and with her face averted she gave him her hand ; " and you will, then"—

" Save Saise or die !" replied the young creole, in a firm voice.

" And then—when she—when Saise is yours"—

" I will seek out a distant land where men are not sold and maltreated like beasts. I am of French origin ; my family belongs to the noblest in the country. I will go to France."

" With Saise ?"

" With my wife."

" Farewell then, St Clyde, farewell ! May God protect and defend you," cried Gabrielle, and then hurried back to the house.

A white rose that she wore in her bosom had fallen where she stood ; St Clyde picked it up, kissed it, hid it on his heart, and then hastened away, mounted his horse and galloped off, taking the road that led up the river. Having reached

the landing-place, he only remained there while they prepared the flat boat to ferry him and his horse across to the other bank; and impelled by four stout arms, it was not long in bearing him over the smooth surface of the mighty river to its eastern bank.

"Have any Indians crossed this ferry?" asked he, after a while, addressing himself to the eldest of the two rowers, who appeared to be the owner of the boat.

The man looked at him and laughed.

"No," said he; "when did you ever hear of an Indian crossing a ferry? I never did—they can spend their money more to their liking—they can get whisky for it; and if the red fellows can save a cent for that purpose, they will willingly put themselves to any inconvenience that suits their fancy, except, indeed, that of working."

"Then they have not crossed over?" asked St Clyde, in dismay.

"Yes, they have," rejoined the younger rower; "but not by the ferry: they all sat in two little canoes that they brought over with them, and let their horses swim behind them."

"And do you think that I shall find them?"

"I should think you would have no difficulty. As Ben here tells me, who came across just now, they have got a quantity of whisky bottles with them, and so they are not likely to hunt any more to-day. They landed a little further up, and if you will give yourself the trouble to go to that house which you see shining there between the willows and cotton-trees, I think that you will be put upon the right track."

At that very moment the boat touched the shore. St Clyde led out his horse, which cautiously pawed

the ground as he walked along, and putting the fare into the hand of the youth who had jumped out to hold the boat's cable, he sprang into the saddle and rode off quickly to the not distant dwelling, which, low in itself and built at the water edge, was as yet surrounded by the high trees which the new settler meant to make his livelihood by cutting down and turning into cord-wood for steamboats.

The backwoodsman stood in the door.

"Good day, sir!" cried out St Clyde; "have you seen anything of the Indians who crossed over yesterday, not far from here?"

The man listened without answering a word, and, looking in the direction of the wood, stood silent for several minutes. St Clyde, who could only suppose that his question had not been heard, repeated it, and requested an answer. The American remained standing as if he were hewn out of stone, till the young man could no longer suppress an impatient exclamation.

"Can you find a man, when he sits in a wood and screams himself hoarse?" was the counter question, according to the never-failing custom of the New Englanders.

"If I am near enough to hear him, I can, of course," exclaimed the creole, in some displeasure; "but I ask you whether the Indians"——

"There they are, screaming in the wood," said the American, drily, pointing with his short red tobacco-pipe to a narrow pathway that led into the thicket.

"The Indians?" asked St Clyde, in amazement.

"Ahem!" nodded the other, and then continued smoking without taking any further notice of



the stranger; but the creole, who had meanwhile listened attentively, now thought that he heard wild confused sounds, and with a short expression of thanks, he proceeded as quickly as he could through the thick underwood to the quarter from whence the uproar came, even more and more loudly. After a short ride he reached an open space, close to the edge of a small trail of marsh like that on the sea-shore, which the Mississippi had left behind it in one of its overflowings, and which was not yet dry. There he saw a scene as picturesque as it was peculiar.

Stretched upon the luxuriant grass, surrounded by a semicircle of towering fires, whose smoke, blowing down upon them, served to keep off the countless mosquitoes that were ready to attack them, there lay beneath giant cotton-trees, several red-skins, some with, some without their hunting dress; but all with a nearly emptied whisky bottle in their hands. They were roaring out, rather than singing, old battle-songs or newly learnt French and English melodies. The one who seemed to be the leader of the party, and who was the soberest of them, even now had taken out his pointed scalping-knife, and kept time by striking it at regular intervals into the green grass on which he lay with his face upturned to the breezy tree-tops, while the rest, all in much the same attitude, accompanied him not only with their voices but with their fists and hatchets, making thus a primitive but ear-rending concert.

It appeared that the leader of the party was the first to discover the stranger. Without moving more than was necessary to measure him from top to toe, he held his bottle toward him, and stam-

mered out, while a faint drunken smile overspread his features :

“ Here—stranger ! here—drin—drink, I say ! ”

“ Great God ! ” groaned St Clyde, horrified, as he looked upon the scarcely conscious forms of the savages, “ were these the men from whom I expected help ? Lost—lost—all, all is lost ! ”

He hid his face in his hands, and remained for a few moments absorbed in speechless grief.

“ Drink, I say ! ” said the leader again ; “ will you not drink out of the same bottle as the Indian, the poor Indian, eh ? The poor Indian is a great chieftain’s son ; go to the deuce ! ” He sank back upon the root of a tree, and began his song anew.

The creole dismounted, and, with arms crossed, and eyes fixed upon the earth, walked up and down near the drunken hunters, while the leader of the savage band, with glassy vacant stare, looked up at the green dome above him, and sang a verse of an Indian war-song—

“ I have slain the Chief of Muskokee,  
His wife I have burnt at yonder tree ;  
And his favourite dog I have hung up high,  
Hung by his hind legs, slowly to die !  
Huh, huh, huh, of the Muskokee,  
Wah, wah, wah, the scalp you see ! ”

At the name of Muskokee, St Clyde stood still and listened, for he knew that of late the Riccarees had had many bloody conflicts with that tribe ; the Chocktaws and the Muskokees having also been at war, this song proved the young Indian to belong to one or other of them. St Clyde, therefore turned to him, and said—“ To which tribe do you belong ; are you a Chocktaw ? ” The Indian, without heeding the question, went on singing—

"I have left his skull all naked and bare,  
And here is his scalp and the long scalp hair;  
His flesh fills the panther's hungry maw,  
And his bloody bones the gaunt wolves gnaw!  
Huh, huh, huh, of the Muskokee,  
Wah, wah, wah, the scalp you see!"

"Are you a Chocktaw Indian?" asked the creole again, still more earnestly, as he bent down over him, and laid his hand upon his shoulder; "speak, are you a Chocktaw?"

The savage only muttered a half-intelligible curse, and continued—

"His tendons I use to string my bow,  
When I follow the track of some single foe;  
Like a reed in the tempest the weak Muskokee  
Will quiver before the brave Riccaree!  
Huh, huh, huh, of the Musk"—

"What the deuce is the matter with you?" said he, suddenly stopping, as St Clyde, at the word *Riccaree*, exclaimed in a tone of joyful surprise—

"Ha! Riccaree! You are a Riccaree?—You are a Riccaree?" he repeated once more, after a short pause.

"Very well! what of that?" was the Indian's curt reply, as, trying to find the thread of the interrupted song, he drummed with his heels upon the grass in a vacant manner.

"You must come with me, and save a child of your tribe who is in great danger."

"My tribe is in Missouri," muttered the red son of the woods, and then he hummed, in a low voice—

"His tendons I use to string my bow,  
When I follow the track of some single foe."

"But your tribe has been robbed!" cried St Clyde in despair. "Man, has this accursed whisky

so burnt up all thy reason that thou hast no more pity, no more feeling left?"

"No more whisky left?" the hunter repeated, rolling out his tongue. "No—no more, not a drop—give us a drop?"

"Ha!" said the creole, struck by a lucky thought, "you shall have whisky, a whole caskful; but first come along with me and help me."

"A cask of whisky?" repeated the Indian, half raising himself; "a whole caskful?" The idea was too overpowering, he could not grasp it. Meanwhile his companions broke out into so deafening a war-song, while they tossed their arms in the air, that an old alligator, which was sunning itself on a trunk that floated in the water, not a hundred paces from where they were, looked up in terror, and then noiselessly glided back into its own more tranquil element.

"A caskful of whisky?" repeated the Indian, after a longer pause. "A great deal of whisky that—come!" and he vainly tried to raise himself.

The creole supported him, and exerting all his strength, at last succeeded in making him stand upright; but what availed it? What could he do with this scarcely conscious mass of brutal sensuality? Was this the man to whom he had looked to help him in freeing his beloved? He ceased to support him, and the young chief staggered, with head sunk on his breast, to the nearest tree.

"Poor Saise!" groaned out St Clyde.

"Ais!" stammered the Indian with an indistinct utterance. "Ais! who speaks of Nedaunis-Ais? She is dead. I want whisky—whisky!"

"Whisky!" shouted the band who had caught the last word. "Whisky! whoop!"

"Nedaunis-Ais! you know her?" cried the creole, springing towards the reeling chief.

"Let me alone, or I will drive this knife into you," said the savage.

"Nedaunis-Ais *lives*," cried the other in a voice of thunder, wholly regardless of the threat, "she *lives*, and you shall help me to *save* her."

"*Lives! save! where?*" cried the drunkard, evidently anxious to grasp the real meaning of the words, and fixing his glassy eyes more steadily upon the stranger.

In a few short words, St Clyde now told the story of the Indian girl to his attentive listener, who stood with hands clasped across his brow, and uttered not a word. When at last he began to understand how the case really stood, when the fate of the unfortunate captive rose before him in colours ever more clear and distinct, in a transport of rage and fury he seized the bottle near him that still held about a third of its former contents, and hurling it wildly against a tree, broke it into a thousand fragments.

"Poison! poison! poison!" he exclaimed; "my sister sold, and I drunk! Poison! poison! the white man's fire-water—poison—whisky!"

"Whisky! whoop!" yelled out the rest of the troop, who had still just sense enough to understand the last word.

"But stop! stop!" suddenly cried the young Indian, while he pushed back his long black hair from his forehead, "it is not yet too late—there is still time;" and throwing off his hunting coat and his leggings, he leaped down from the bank, which was some feet above the water, dived several times, and came swimming back to the land. He then ran off into the wood without first taking the



trouble to resume his dress; and in about a quarter of an hour, returned upon the back of a small snorting pony. His clothes and his weapons were then soon huddled together, and almost before the creole could mount his horse he beckoned him to follow.

"But your comrades," objected St Clyde; "what can we two effect alone?"

"Come on!" said the son of the woods, "come on! Would you stay here till morning to hear them stammer out, 'More whisky, more whisky!' They are Chocktaws. I must go—you come with me: two are enough."

He did not even wait for his companion's reply, but rushed off to the Mississippi, threw himself once more into the river in order to dispel the last trace of intoxication; and then, having put on his slender apparel, brought out a canoe that had been hidden in the bushes. He made St Clyde seat himself in the middle of it, and hold a horse by the bridle on either side, while he himself rowed the boat swiftly and skilfully across the broad rushing river.

But St Clyde had been so long detained, first by the state in which he found the Indians, and next by the crossing of the river, that the sun was already setting when they reached the western shore. It was now the creole's turn to guide, and he led the brother of Saise, whom he had so opportunely found, to the magistrate's house. On the way, Wetako—this was the Riccaree's name—told him that he had followed his sister's track, and met with and slain her base ravisher; that he had wandered about for many months vainly seeking his stolen treasure, but that he had never been able to find the least trace of the lost one, who had been, he supposed, conveyed, through the wretch's fiend-

ish arts, out of the reach of his helping arm. In utter despair, he had at last found a band of Chocktaws, who were hunting in the woods of Louisiana, and selling their game in the small towns around. Rendered reckless by grief and life-weariness, he became unmindful of all he once held dear and honourable, and had given himself up to drink, thus following the example of the whole of his unfortunate race.

The double bath, and the sudden shock of the half joyous, half sorrowful news respecting his sister, had now banished every remnant of intoxication. The *Indian*—the cold, calculating savage—had once more waked in his breast, and with a rapid glance he now saw all the dangers that threatened the one whom he loved best on earth. It is true that he did not know the laws of the whites; but he did know how difficult, nay, how impossible it is for an Indian ever to recover what *THEY* have once laid their hand upon, and he seemed to have no hope of saving Saise except through fraud or violence. Either method suited him equally well, so that it answered his purpose.

It was already night, when they reached the magistrate's house; and it appeared that important events had been taking place there within the last few hours. From the confines of the States lying to the north of the Mississippi, constables had arrived singly, in pursuit of a planter and his accomplices. It appeared that the fugitives had kept together as far as Waterloo; after that, they had divided, and two of the messengers went down the course of the river to endeavour by all means to stop further flight, while the others followed the fresher track up the stream, in order to prevent

the fugitives from turning inland and reaching the borders of Texas.

Immediately upon hearing this intelligence, the suspicions of the magistrate had pointed towards the stranger; and he had, even late in the afternoon, sent a messenger to Fausse Rivière to arrest him, not on account of the Indian girl, but on the presumption of his being concerned in the slave-stealing above mentioned. And by this means he hoped to arrive at the truth as to whether Saise were really a negro, or whether she had been nefariously stolen away from her tribe.

St Clyde now insisted upon obtaining a delay in the giving up of Saise, to which the magistrate quite agreed, but said, that for this purpose the return of the deputy sheriff must be awaited, as the high sheriff was engaged up, and both the constables down the river; and thus the creole found himself compelled, much against his will, to delay taking any further steps until then. It is true, that he implored to be allowed to take the letter himself, but that would not have been legal; and the magistrate consoled him by the reflection that after all, a few hours could make no difference, and that, in spite of the delay, he could be at Fausse Rivière by break of day, and protect the poor girl from continued imprisonment. But the deputy sheriff never came. Hour after hour they waited and agonised; at last the magistrate himself exclaimed, indignantly—

“Plague take the fellow! I shall be obliged to propose to the sheriff to dismiss him; there is no doing anything with him—he drinks himself stupid, makes a fool of himself with the mulatto women at Fausse Rivière, and neglects his duty.”

"I will go to meet him," suggested St Clyde; "perhaps he is lingering on the way."

"That would do you no good," said the magistrate; "for if he is lingering thus, you will never find him—he keeps his haunts very secret. But if he be not returned early in the morning, I will ride over with you, and both together we shall at once settle the matter."

Thus they spent the night, in anxious and sorrowful expectation. But the Riccaree could not possibly be made to understand the cause of the delay, and continually wanted to set off, to free and to revenge his sister.

It might have been a little past two o'clock, for the silence of the frogs showed that morning was near, when a loud knocking was heard at the door of the house. The slave whose turn it was to watch, opened, and there rushed up the steps, not indeed the deputy sheriff, but the constable, who gave out, in a few words, that it was proved on the best authority that Ritwell was the hired kidnapper of the body of plantation negroes, and that he was no longer to be found at Fausse Rivière; and also, that Beaufort's overseer must be with him wherever he was, for that he, too, having probably been warned, had set out in the middle of the night with the Indian girl, whom he had just bought; and further, that she followed him by no means willingly, but had to be got off chained and gagged, as negroes usually are.

"Wah!" cried Wetako, springing up from the earth on which he had squatted until now; "away! —away! we must away!"

St Clyde seized his hat and prepared to follow him, but he was stopped by the magistrate, who begged him to delay a little longer. He repre-

sented to him that they could effect nothing by force till a sufficient number of planters was assembled. Of course that would not be till the following day at noon, and therefore he entreated them to join his constables in conveying the intelligence to all the plantations around as quickly as possible. Even if Saise's rescue were thus delayed for a few hours, it would be accomplished with far greater certainty. But neither the creole nor the Indian would hear of this.

"No," cried the latter, "Nedaunis-Ais in chains! Wetako, with knife and rifle, should be on her track—we must away!"

"For God's sake, commit no murder!" cried the magistrate, terrified; "you do not know our laws; imprisonment for life would be the penalty."

The Indian heard this with a savage smile.

"Why then do you not catch the panther which kills your young horses by night?" asked he, tauntingly. "Wetako is a man, and his tracks are deep. Follow him if you can."

He sprang at once into his saddle, and the creole did the same, stopping however for a moment to bid adieu to the magistrate, who cautioned him anxiously; and then they galloped along the road that led to the place from which the overseer had started, in order to follow his track from its very beginning.

The first sunbeams were already reddening the dusky green of the rustling cypress-trees, when the riders reached Beaufort's plantation. There they found everything in confusion. Almost all the planters from the neighbouring settlements had assembled there, armed with double-barrelled guns, bowie knives, and harpoons; and one division of them was about to be sent off—so at least



St Clyde heard—to stop the fugitives. But he and his companion only remained here long enough to discover the main point—the way the overseer's gig had taken, and then they rushed on in pursuit of it like two dark avenging deities.

This gig had excited a suspicion of Durm much sooner than he had calculated upon; for this very day he had sent off his things to Houston, addressed to a mercantile house in Texas, to proceed in a steamboat that was lying there. Some of the negroes whom he had treated brutally, apprised their master of these surmises, and also that a certain number of their fellow-slaves, of whom the greater part had been the overseer's spies, were missing, and that no trace of them remained.

Durm had, moreover, been compelled to leave his newly-bought slave in the old negress's hut throughout the previous day, for Gabrielle had firmly insisted on it, and he feared to excite suspicion by open resistance. This delayed until night the flight, which a messenger from Ritwell warned him to expedite; and hence it came to pass that while he was still many miles distant from the place of rendezvous, he heard his well-mounted pursuers in full chase behind him. Scarcely did the thundering of the horses' hoofs reach his ear than he rapidly turned out of the road into the bed of a small dried-up brook. The negroes, who were mounted on horses stolen from their master or his neighbours, had already ridden on towards the place appointed, and Durm had hoped to be able to overtake them. However, his present stratagem availed him for the moment; for the planters, who were not much accustomed to follow a track, did not remark the turning off of the wheels till it was too late, and then they went on

following the road indicated to them by the negroes, unwilling to lose time by turning back; for, at all events, thought they, once at the meeting-place, they should be sure to catch them all.

Durm, who was thoroughly acquainted with every step of ground in the woods and swamps of the district, knew that, if he followed the edge of a little thicket, he should find a tolerably open clearing, and only have to contend with the remaining roots of cypress-trees: that in less than a quarter of a mile from thence, there was a cross-way leading over the swamp as far as Cutoff, and that as soon as he reached that place, he should be safe from all pursuit.

But he had not reckoned upon one obstacle, and that was Saise. So long as he had kept on the road, the unhappy girl never relinquished the hope of being overtaken by her beloved—for she, too, hung her very soul upon the young creole; but now that she found herself surrounded by the tall forest trees, and wholly in the power of a man whom she had feared and loathed from the first moment she saw him, she believed that her fate was indeed sealed, and sought with all the strength of despair to burst her chains and get free.

"Sit still, I say, in the devil's name," growled out the overseer, who was not in the best temper without this additional provocation, "or I will give you a cut on the head with my lash, which will keep you quiet."

Saise remained for a moment exhausted; then putting forth all her strength, she succeeded—not indeed in breaking her chains, but in bursting the cords that held her hands down. She instantly used them to get off the gag which the villains had taken the precaution of putting on; and then,

impelled by anguish and despair, uttered a cry for help so sudden and loud, that the pony that drew the gig swerved to one side in terror, and dashed towards the wood. Durm, who was perfectly stunned by Saise's scream, could not check him fast enough—nay, the reins had slipped out of his hand, and in the very next moment the light vehicle had run against a cypress stump, and overturned both master and slave.

Durm jumped up, with rage and revenge in his glance; but the pony claimed his attention in the first place. The gig contained all his worldly goods, and if the pony were to run away he would be lost indeed. He sprang to the head of the horse, which was plunging violently; made him rear till blood mingled with the foam at his mouth; and then, with giant strength, lifted up the gig, while the frightened creature stood still and trembling.

And now he turned his whole anger against the cause of the accident; for Saise, almost stunned by her fall, had by this time recovered herself, and again uttered the same piercing scream.

"Death and destruction!" cried Durm, rushing towards her, and aiming at her head a blow from his loaded whip, which, had it struck there, would have killed her on the spot; but she threw up her fettered arms, and the chain received the full weight of the stroke.

Durm was about to repeat the blow, when a still distant but sharp and defined cry resounded wildly through the silent forest, and he stopped to listen to it. Saise appeared to be suddenly turned to stone, so rigid and motionless was her aspect while gazing in the direction from which that sound had proceeded.

"Ha! there are others coming; but they too are upon the road," muttered the overseer to himself. "Plague on it, the affair is getting dangerous! Come, my dove, and be rational; the first scream you utter again will be your death." And so saying he bent down, seized the statue-like girl, and tried to lift her into the gig. But his touch woke up the blood that had almost seemed frozen in her veins by that strange cry, and lifting up the light chains which confined her hands, she struck such a blow with them at the head of her tyrant, that he loosed her and reeled back half stunned. Again, and louder than before, she sent forth her despairing cry for help; and Durm, made frantic by rage and vexation, had no sooner heard the answering and now fast-approaching signal, than he tore his broad knife out of its sheath, and rushing upon the horrified and shrinking girl, grinding his teeth the while, he plunged the sharp steel into her breast.

Saise, mortally wounded, staggered, and fell amidst the yellow leaves; while Durm leaped to the gig, tore a large pocket-book out of it, hid it in his waistcoat, cut the traces of the gig, threw his double-barrelled gun on his shoulder, leaped on the horse, and the next moment disappeared in the thicket.

Scarcely had the bushes closed behind him, when on the other side of the small clearing appeared two horsemen mounted on foaming steeds, who suddenly pulled up, as if struck by lightning where they stood. So they remained for a few seconds. Then with a wild cry of anguish, one of them threw himself off the saddle down by the bleeding form of the lovely and unhappy girl; while the other, rising in his stirrups, seemed to

listen intently, as with fixed and glassy eyes he gazed into the wood. Apparently some distant sound must have reached his ear, for without even deigning to cast one look upon the murdered one, he plunged his spurs into the side of his horse, which swerved aside at the smell of blood, leaped over the gig that stood in the way, and silently, but with an aspect that spoke of death and destruction, followed upon the track of the flying murderer.

Not one syllable escaped his trembling lips, not one glance wavered from the track in the soft ground; with the bridle in one hand and his rifle in the other, he flew swiftly through the forest, and had hardly proceeded five hundred paces when he came in sight of his foe, who was occupied in cutting through one of the traces that had caught in a bush, and thus for a few moments delayed his flight.

Durm looked round, and, recognising an Indian in the rapidly-approaching form, was at first in doubt as to whether or no he need expect to find an enemy in him; for he for his own part had never had any intercourse with the descendants of that savage race, and he knew that they very seldom took any part in the quarrels of white men with each other. But just as the thought of the murdered girl, who belonged to that unhappy people, shot through his mind, all further doubt was removed by the young Indian himself, who suddenly reined in his horse, raised his rifle, and its red flash shone for a second through the mysterious gloom of the primeval forest.

The overseer felt himself wounded; but no time remained for thought—the avenger was sweeping on. He raised his gun to his shoulder with



intent to shoot him down ; but the tomahawk had been hurled, and struck his left elbow, thereby giving a wrong direction to the charge he fired. A few shots only grazed Wetako's shoulder ; and before the murderer, aware that he had missed his aim, could fire the second barrel, the avenger flew by, the war-cry of the Riccarees echoed yelling through the woods, the bowie-knife whizzed, and the wretch sank down howling.

Meanwhile, supporting on his shoulder the pale face of his beloved, the young creole knelt by the bleeding form of the beautiful and unfortunate girl. Promptly and skilfully had he stanchd the widely-gaping wound, but it was too late: the death-blow had pierced her heart. He heard the galloping by of the pursuers, who streamed from all sides to prevent the success of the negro-kidnapping—he heard the war-cry of the Riccaree ; but he heeded neither: his eyes were fixed on the red fast-flowing life-current of his so dearly-loved one, and at length all about him grew dark—dark as midnight.

When he recovered, the Riccaree stood at his side. He had wrapped his sister's corpse in his blanket ; and now that he observed the returning consciousness of the white man, he lifted it on his horse.

"Wetako, what art thou doing?" cried the creole, starting up in horror ; "whither goest thou?"

"I will take to the tribe of the Riccarees the body of their chief's daughter," said the young Indian, with a gloomy smile. "I will tell them it is the gift of peace that the whites send them. They have stolen our old land ; here is blood to fatten the new.—Farewell !"

"And the robber?" asked St Clyde, looking the while, half stunned as he was, on the blood-stained body the other held in his arms.

"The robber!" laughed the Riccaree, while he flung back his leathern overcoat; "the robber belongs to me!" and the creole saw with horror the bloody scalp of the slain hanging at the girdle of the savage. Before he could utter another word Wetako had leaped into his saddle, with his sister's corpse before him, had dashed the spurs into the foaming horse's sides, and disappeared from the white man's sight.

Meanwhile, the planters in pursuit had overtaken Ritwell, the negro kidnapper; and, with the accustomed despatch in cases of the kind, had hanged him upon the nearest tree. In his pocket-book they found abundant proof that he had deserved a tenfold death; for the pure descent of the Indian girl was established beyond all doubt by a letter from one of his accomplices. Later, on following the track of the gig in order to look for the overseer, they found the signs of the conflict, as well as the gig itself. Not far from thence, pale and stiff with a discharged pistol in his right hand, and leaning against the stem of a young tree, lay the corpse of the creole, St Clyde.

F. GERSTÄCKER.

## The Bellows-Mender of Lyons.

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My history is composed of the most singular circumstances. Condemned by my birth to associate among beings of the most abject class, my elevation was the work of human malice. That evil of society which ruins so many fortunes laid the solid foundation of mine. I am married, rich, and happy, from having been the docile instrument of an extraordinary act of malevolence.

I was born in a little hamlet situated in the neighbourhood of Montelemart. My father had made many fruitless efforts to raise himself above indigence. His last resource in his old age arose from the exercise of a trade which he had acquired in his youth—that of a bellows-mender. This, though not a very brilliant occupation, was the work at which I was placed at that time of life when I was thought capable of earning my livelihood. Satisfied at first in following this business under the inspection of my father, nature had endowed me with an industrious disposition, and I soon rivalled, and even excelled, my master. Ambition led me to imagine my talents were fitted for a wider sphere, and some of my excursions as far as the gates of Montelemart succeeded beyond my

wishes. After furnishing all I could spare for the support of my father in his old age, I found means to gather a little sum of money, which enabled me to undertake a journey to Lyons. I made my appearance in that great city, amply provided with such articles as belonged to my profession, and the public places, and most crowded streets, soon resounded with my cries. I was young, dexterous, and well-formed; I sold my wares rapidly, and became a general favourite with the servant maids, which was the utmost limit of my ambition at this time.

Returning home late one evening to my little garret, which served me for a warehouse as well as a lodging, I was accosted by four well-dressed young men, who seemed to be taking an evening walk. We were in one of the most solitary streets of the quarter of St Clair. They threw out a few pleasantries on the lateness of the evening, accompanied by sarcasms on my profession of bellows-mender, which I answered in a style of raillery, at which they appeared to be surprised. I saw them look at each other significantly, and immediately after heard them say, "This is our man." I own that these words alarmed me, finding myself alone in the dark without any means of resistance, and at the mercy of four stout young men. What would become of me, was the reflection that occupied my mind, when one of them, who guessed at the cause of my terror, soon dispelled it by saying to me, in a tone of affability—

"Perourou"—the name which the people of Lyons give their bellows-menders—"Perourou," said he, "you, probably, have not supped, neither have we. Our supper is ready, will you join us? Our intention is to do you more good than you

have any idea of. Come and sup with us, and after supper we will talk with you. Do not be afraid, we are gentlemen. If you will not enter into our schemes we shall only require your promise of secrecy, which you will run no risk in keeping."

There was something in the voice of the person who spoke to me, as well as in the proposition itself, so seductive, that I accepted the offer without hesitation. My new acquaintances, after having made me cross several streets, entered a house and conducted me into an apartment elegantly furnished, where we found six other young men, who seemed to have been waiting for their friends impatiently. A short explanation followed concerning me, and we sat down to supper. I had the honour of making the company laugh by some of my arch observations, and confirmed them in the good opinion with which it was necessary they should be impressed before they would come to a further explanation. The servants withdrew, after placing the dessert on the table, and for a few minutes a profound silence prevailed throughout the assembly, which till then had been sufficiently noisy.

At length he who presided at the repast addressed me in the following words:—

"The ten persons with whom you have supped are all citizens of Lyons. We are engravers; our joint-profits, with what we obtain from our families, afford us an easy independence; and we also acquire by our talents a considerable share of reputation. The happiness we enjoyed has been lately disturbed by love on the one side, and pride on the other. In the street of St Dominic lives a picture merchant, who is himself an ordinary man,



but who has a daughter eminently beautiful. The city of Lyons, extensive as it is, contains not another masterpiece worthy of being placed on a level with this charming creature. Possessed of every accomplishment, and endowed with every grace, all her amiable qualities are shaded by one single defect; and that defect is an insupportable pride. Vain of being the object of general admiration, she fondly imagines that none ought to aspire to her hand under the rank of a prince. Her father, who is a tolerably good *connoisseur* in painting, but who has a very limited understanding with respect to everything else, has entirely spoiled her by adulation, amounting almost to idolatry. Novels, her looking-glass, and habitual compliments from all around her, have raised self-love into vanity, and vanity into arrogance, and the most lofty disdain towards all who are not decorated with the marks of opulence or the distinctions of rank. I had the honour of engaging her notice, from my connexions in business with her father. Sometimes she accorded me the singular privilege of giving me her hand at a ball, or of attending her to the theatre. These slight favours turned my brain; I thought myself beloved, because I was preferred to others, and ventured to unfold my pretensions to her father, who lent a favourable ear to my offers. Indeed, my family, profession, fortune, and situation, gave me a right to presume that my alliance would be agreeable to the young lady. Judge of my surprise when, on the first overture respecting marriage, the insolent girl, in my presence, answered her father in a tone of the most haughty arrogance — ‘Do you think, sir, that a young woman like me was born for nothing better than an engraver?’

"I confess that this insolent and imprudent remark extinguished every sentiment of love in my bosom, and love, when fled, is easily followed by a desire of revenge. 'My friends,' I exclaimed to those who now surround me, 'this disdainful girl has, in my person, committed a general outrage against us all. Espouse my cause, and let us form such a plan as shall serve to show her that she has not indeed been born to the honour of becoming the wife of an engraver.'

"Such is my history ; do you feel sufficient confidence, and think yourself endowed with sufficient discretion to merit being raised above your present condition? Beneath the abject covering which now disguises you, it is easy to discern that you have some soul, and no common share of understanding. Will you venture to become the husband of a charming woman, who, to attain perfection, wants only to have her pride mortified and her vanity punished?"

"Yes," answered I, with firmness, "I perfectly comprehend the part which you would have me to act, and I will fulfil it in such a manner that you shall have no reason to blush for your pupil."

The following day we conferred together, as we did ever after, with extreme precaution. During a whole week, I bathed two hours every morning and evening to get rid of my tinkering skin and complexion. In the interval of bathing, the most elegant hair-dresser of Lyons gave my long tresses the form most in fashion. My ten friends furnished me with assortments of the finest linen, and the most elegant dresses for the various seasons, and were soon so fond of their work that we became inseparable. Almost their whole time was employed in giving me instructions. One taught me

to read, another to write ; another gave me some ideas of drawings, a few lessons in music, a little in short of everything ; so that during three months, my time, thoughts, and attention were wholly absorbed in my studies ; and I soon perceived that this kind of life suited perfectly my taste. I felt the utmost ardour to carry to perfection these first rudiments of my new education, which had become my chief delight. Nature had furnished me not only with a disposition for study, but with a memory so retentive that my friends observed with some astonishment the rapid progress of their disciple.

At length they thought me sufficiently accomplished to carry their projects into full execution, and I was removed from my closet to take possession of a spacious suite of apartments in one of the first hotels in Lyons. The bellows-mender disappeared altogether, to make way for the rich Marquis of Rouperou, principal proprietor of the mines of Dauphiny. It was under this title that I presented myself to the picture merchant as a purchaser who paid little attention to a few *louis*, provided he met with pieces that were original. A most perfect imitator of my experienced tutors, I had learnt to twirl my seals, display my repeating watch with an air of indifference, show the brilliant which I wore on my finger, or handle an elegant snuff-box, on which was painted a fancy portrait, which I modestly observed was the picture of a beloved sister.

I was desirous of pleasing, and easily succeeded ; but it was not enough to impose on the father. In order to fulfil the views of my patrons, the daughter must also be deceived. While I was meditating on this point, the picture merchant

gave me notice that he had just received a superb collection of engravings from Rome, requesting me to call the same morning, as he would not expose them for sale till I should have made my choice.

I hastened to his house, unconscious of the fate that awaited me. Instead of being received as usual by the father, it was the daughter, whom till then I had in vain wished to see; or rather it was beauty itself which stood before my eyes in the form of that lovely young woman.

My dear friend, a feeling heart often beats under an unpolished form. More susceptible at my age of passion than of libertinism, my palpitating heart felt all the power of beauty. A new world unfolded itself before my eyes. I soon forgot my borrowed part. One sentiment absorbed my soul, one idea enchained my faculties. The charming Aurora perceived her triumph, and seemed to listen with complacency to the incoherent expressions of passion which escaped my lips. That interview fixed my destiny for ever! All difficulties vanished before the new emotions which animated my bosom. A single instant inspired me with the resolution of devoting my days and nights to study, in order, that possessed with the advantages of knowledge, I might be less unworthy of the happiness to which I aspired.

Every morning I found some excuse for a visit to the picture merchant, every morning I had some new trinket to exhibit, or some object of taste on which to consult Aurora.

It was the season of flowers, and I presented her every day with a bouquet composed of such as were best adapted to her style of beauty; my friends often joined in the sonnet, or madrigal, of which I

obtained the credit, and I sometimes surprised the fine eyes of this charming creature fixed on mine with an expression of tender approbation.

Six months passed in this manner, the engravers being too desirous of complete revenge to hazard losing it by precipitation. Every evening they required an exact account of my conduct, with which they were so well satisfied that they furnished me with funds far beyond the wants of the personage I represented.

I received at length a formal invitation from the picture merchant to a *fête* which he gave in the country, and of which I was led to think myself the hero. The vain beauty behaved so respectfully towards me, loaded me with such distinguished attentions, was so lovely, so enchanting, whether as mistress of the *fête* or its brightest ornament, that the moment we were alone, impelled by an emotion which I was unable to suppress, I threw myself at her feet and made an offer of marriage. She heard me with modest dignity, while a tear of joy, which dimmed for a moment her fine eyes, convinced me that pride was not the only feeling which agitated her heart. Yes, I discovered that I was beloved!

After having deceived the daughter with respect to the person, it was necessary to blind the father with respect to the fortune. This was not difficult. Possessed of little penetration, he gave full credit to the story I related of myself. My father, I told him, lived retired at his seat in the farthest part of Dauphiny. Old age and the gout deprived him of the hope of accompanying his son to the altar, but he gave his consent to the marriage, and that much the more willingly, as the fortune of his house had been considerably increased from the interest



which his son had early taken in the mines of his province. I dwelt also with secret complacency on the words "without portion," alleging that my fortune was too considerable to think of augmenting it by that of a wife. Before the end of this conversation we were perfectly agreed, for I left him absolute master of the conditions. All I required was, the avoiding any expensive and unnecessary *éclat*, as both the family of Aurora and my own were at a distance from Lyons. The marriage, it was fixed, should take place on that day fortnight, and I undertook to arrange all the preliminary articles.

Having with some difficulty obtained permission to leave Aurora, I hastened to Lyons, informed my friends that the drama was hastening to a conclusion, and related all that had passed. They overwhelmed me with so many compliments, that had I only possessed a slight tincture of vanity, I might have believed they rallied me. The event, however, proved that they were serious; and their revenge on the haughty Aurora was as expensive as it was singular. That very morning they sent, in my name, to my mistress, the most magnificent bouquet, a watch, bracelets, jewels, laces of exquisite fineness, forming a present sufficiently splendid to complete the deception of both father and daughter. Toward the end of the week the contract of marriage was framed, in which I took care to sign my real name, a precaution which you will perceive hereafter was not useless to me. In this contract I consented to certain stipulations in my bride's favour, which I was very far from thinking would one day prove so much to her advantage.

I deceived her,—but Heaven is my witness it was not without remorse! In presence of the

beautiful Aurora, intoxicating love made me forget everything but herself—and when I was with my joyous friends, their pleasantries, their *bonton*, the kind of dependence in which they held me, their services, their instructions, rendered me thoughtless with respect to the present, as well as careless with respect to the future. But in the stillness of solitude, sophistry and passion disappeared, leaving a dreadful prospective before me. When I associated the idea of Aurora with the miserable flock-bed which was soon to be her portion; when I figured to myself her delicate hands employed in preparing the coarsest nourishment; when I beheld her, who deserved a palace, lodging under the thatched roof of my aged father, I shrunk back with horror, or started up covered with a cold perspiration. More than once I resolved to throw myself at the feet of the injured Aurora, make a full confession of my crime, and cover myself with the infamy which belonged to him who could so degrade himself as to act the part of a villain. But self-love and passion came alike to my aid. Enchained by the fascinating enjoyments of the present, my imagination gilded with some rays of hope the gloom of the future. The unhappiness of Aurora, said I to myself, will be but transient; love will soften into bitterness. Her mortal enemies are blinded by their desire of revenge. She will, she shall be happy in spite of them!—they will leave me some money, and the means of procuring more by industry. I should be a wretch indeed if I did not devote my life to the task of strewing flowers along her path. When she learns who I am, her resentment will, no doubt, at first be vehement; but when her good sense shall perceive that the evil is irreparable, resignation will

come to her aid—love will supply the place of riches, and we shall yet be happy.

Such were my reflections during eight days previous to that on which I conducted my mistress to the altar. At the moment when she pronounced the vow to live and die with me, a sudden shivering ran through all my veins—a general trepidation seized my whole frame. I had never had so near a view of villany. I should infallibly have sunk to the earth, if a flood of tears had not come to my relief, while the silly crowd who surrounded us mistook this last cry of expiring virtue for an excess of sensibility. Aurora herself was deceived; I felt, from the warmth of her caresses, that the vain personage was ambitious of appearing as much my mistress as my bride. The engravers, in order to reward me, as they said, for the ability with which I had acted my part, permitted me to prolong the enchantment for a fortnight. Excess of love a while banished from my mind the fatal catastrophe which was fast approaching. At length, after various conferences with the implacable enemies of Aurora, it was decreed that we should set out on our journey to my native soil.

In proposing to my wife an excursion of which I foresaw all the cruel consequences, I could not prevent a deep sigh from escaping me, to which the credulous Aurora paid no attention. Her lively imagination was elated with the idea of travelling by my side in a magnificent equipage, attended by her women, escorted by servants on horseback, and finding means of indulging at once her pride and her love; ideas excusable enough at eighteen, which was the age of my wife. She was delighted in making preparations for a journey, the approach of which was to me distraction. More

than once I implored my patrons for mercy; the obligations I had entered into were laid before me. We began our journey.

Two of my ten friends served me as couriers, while he who had paid his addresses to Aurora, pushed his imprudence so far as to offer himself to me as coachman. It is true that a wig, dexterously stuck on his hair, and a patch fixed on his right eye, so disguised him that even his friends did not recognise him; three others of the young engravers gaily rode behind the carriage as lacqueys. The other four, detained at Lyons by their affairs, consoled themselves in not being of the party by making the travellers promise to write to them from every place where we should stop to rest ourselves, and this we did frequently, travelling only by short stages. Scarcely could these wicked domestics contain their mirth when they heard my vain bride, who always spoke to them with haughty distance, addressing herself to me in terms the most respectful, inquiring the names of my *châteaux*, the extent of my estates, and of my seignorial rights of hunting and fishing; dwelling with complacency on my mines, which to her lively apprehension were equal at least to those of Peru. On subjects such as these turned our conversations, when three leagues beyond Montelemart we perceived the narrow lane which led to a village, the steeple of which appeared distant from the high road. This poor village, alas! was mine. The critical moment was approaching.

We passed over lands that certainly were not mine, and after three hours' long and difficult travelling our coachman, too well instructed, stopped the carriage at the door of a miserable hut. An old man, clad in the homely garb of poverty, was on

the threshold taking the air. In this old man I discovered my venerable father. No, my friend, I have no colours with which I can trace this original scene! Figure to yourself the trembling Perourou on one side, the haughty Aurora on the other, and six insolent young men ceremoniously placing her on an old broken chair, with most insulting bursts of laughter, and with pleasantries the most aggravating, refining upon their vengeance and her mortification. Figure to yourself the pretended coachman taking off suddenly his patch and his wig, and addressing Aurora with an air of superiority—

“No, madam,” said he, in a tone of inconceivable disdain, “no, you have not been born or brought up for an engraver; such a lot would have done too much honour to your birth, to your fortune, and to your choice. A bellows-mender is worthy of you, and such is he, madam, whom you have taken for your husband.” I was about to answer, but the pretended coachman was already on his seat, the five others threw themselves into the coach choked almost with laughter, and we soon lost sight of the whole equipage.

I expected that the catastrophe would be singular enough, but less terrible than it proved. My engravers, while they taught me my part, had kept their own secret. They carried off everything with them, like the scene-shifters of a theatre, who lock up the decorations after the piece is finished. As for the unfortunate Aurora, she saw nothing of this. Her former lover continued speaking when she no longer heard or felt. The ruffians left her, when they departed, in a deep swoon. Judge of my situation! Recollect that I had now acquired a considerable share of sensibility and delicacy from the instruction I had received, and the manner of



life to which I had lately been accustomed. Alas! in those cruel moments I trembled alike at the thought of losing the woman I adored, or of seeing her restored to life. I lavished on her the most tender cares, and almost breathed wishes that my cares might be unavailing. Ah! my friend, I thought for a long time that my dreadful vows were heard. Nevertheless, after bathing copiously the pallid face of the lovely and delicate Aurora with water, she regained for a moment the use of her senses. Her frenzied eye met mine. "Monster!" she exclaimed, and her senses again forsook her. I took advantage of this second swoon to remove her from the sight of the spectators, composed chiefly of women with withered countenances, who might have passed for witches; and laid my plain bride on a little fresh straw, with which a compassionate neighbour strewed the flock bed of my old father. When she had again recovered the use of her senses, I commanded every one to leave us, in order to have no witness of the explanation, and of the dreadful story which I was fated to relate to my wife.

When I had disembarrassed myself of the crowd, I took Aurora in my arms; I pressed her to my heart—my scalding tears bathed her cheeks. At length she opened her eyes and fixed them on me—mine shrank from her glance. The first use she made of speech was to request me, under pretence of taking repose, which we both wanted, to defer till the next day the hateful detail of the plot of which she had been the victim. I yielded to her request and withdrew, leaving with her the niece of the curé of the parish, whose kind offices she seemed to receive with thankfulness.

How shall I describe to you the horrible night

which I passed ? Fallen at once from a situation the most splendid, in a miserable village which afforded no kind of resource, and in possession only of a few *louis*, while my adored wife, in the morning of life accustomed to constitute, as well as to share the pleasures of society, had been led by an infernal plot to the cabin of an old man, respectable indeed, but in a state of wretched indigence ; and I had been the chief instrument of her misfortunes, the accomplice of the atrocity with which she had been treated ! What would become of her ? In what manner could I act that might least wound her feelings ? Would she think herself sufficiently rich in my attachment and tenderness ? Oh no ! I felt all the horrors of her destiny and my own. Yes, of my own ! I had, indeed, no reverse of fortune to undergo ; I, who was born to wretchedness and nurtured in want. Yet my agonised heart, a heart but too susceptible, told me that I had a sorrow to sustain, perhaps the most cruel in the sad catalogue of human evils. I had not merely to bear indifference from that object in whom I had placed every hope of happiness—to see that heart alienated whose tenderness was necessary to my existence—to read coldness in that eye on whose look my peace depended. I recollected with distraction that it must be my doom, not merely to support indifference, but aversion. I was not merely to become an object of contempt but of horror. I was not merely to feel the bitterness of being hateful to her I loved, but to know that I deserved her hatred—to find that the sharpest of all my sorrows was the poignancy of remorse. Had not I been the fatal cause of all she suffered ? Had not I darkened all the fair prospects of her life, and overwhelmed her with intolerable anguish ?

Had not I, wretch that I was, planted a dagger in her heart? Perhaps she would find a refuge from me in the grave—perhaps her last breath would curse me—or if she pitied and forgave me, could I endure her cruel mercy?—would not her pity and forgiveness be more barbarous than reproach? more terrible than her curse?

Such were the reflections which absorbed my mind, and made so painful the bed on which I had thrown myself to pass the night. The horror of my situation was increased by a continuance of violent rains, which laid under water the cross-road leading to Montelemart, and rendered it impassable for several days. This circumstance prevented me from sending to the town, as I intended, for a carriage to convey Aurora to a lodging less fitted to mortify her pride. You will easily imagine that I sent frequently to inquire respecting the situation of my unfortunate bride. The answers were satisfactory; my attentions were received with gratitude; I was repeatedly told that the next day I should be admitted to see her; that she had made up her mind; that she should display a firmness of character which, in the cruel circumstances in which she was placed, would astonish and confound her vile enemies. All these things, which were repeated to me with an affectation of secrecy, did not lull me into perfect security. That terrible to-morrow affrighted my soul; I dreaded the fatal interview more than death! I was meditating how to elude it under different pretences, when the door of my chamber opened and discovered to me my interesting bride. I threw myself at her feet, and seizing one of her hands bathed it with my tears. She looked at me in this humiliating posture for some time in

silence, then, raising me up, addressed me with all the dignity of pride which nothing could vanquish—"You have deceived me," said she, "it is on your future conduct that my forgiveness shall depend. If any generous sentiment remains at the bottom of your heart; if you are desirous of not making me altogether miserable, do not take advantage of the authority which you have usurped. Mademoiselle offers me a decent retirement at her uncle's house—I have accepted it, because it accords both with my situation and my duties. You may visit me there whenever you please. We will arrange together the means of extricating ourselves from this horrible situation, and of providing for our future support. Rely on my honour for the care of defending your own."

Man is a confiding creature. A kind word from the woman we love is sufficient to soften all the misery she occasions. Notwithstanding the cold disdain of Aurora, I gave her credit for her meekness, without reflecting that it would have been more natural for her to load me with reproaches. During five days my confidence in Aurora's forgiveness continually augmented; and while I traced out to her the plan of life which love suggested to me, I saw her more than once smile at the picture. Could I have imagined that, after so many sufferings, the cruel Aurora had one in reserve for me which surpassed all the rest?

One morning—it was the eighth after our arrival in the village—I awakened after having passed a happy night, soothed by delicious dreams. The day was already far advanced, when my father, reproaching me for my indolence, gave me two letters which he had just received. The handwriting of the directions was unknown to me.

The first I opened was from my friends at Lyons. "We are satisfied with you," said they; "and after having taken exemplary revenge of the haughty Aurora, it is just that we should remember the friendship with which your talents and your conduct have inspired us. You are not made to live in the class among which you were born, and we offer you, with pleasure, the means of extricating yourself from all your embarrassments, without wishing that you should find your gratitude at all burthensome, since we can serve you without any inconvenience to ourselves. You know that we pushed almost to madness the idea of revenge on Aurora; and we had each made the sacrifice of a thousand crowns to carry our plan into execution. You have not expended the third part of this sum. The rest is deposited in the house of Memé, a notary, well known in our city, who will remit it to you on your simple receipt. The jewels, linen, lace, and clothes, with which you amused the credulity of a foolish father, and a haughty girl, will likewise be delivered to you. Take care of Aurora. We have put her into your arms in the hope that you will never give us occasion to regret that we pushed our vengeance too far. Whenever you shall form any undertaking, command the credit, the friendship, and the recommendations of your friends the engravers of Lyons."

Well! exclaimed I joyfully, half my embarrassments have vanished; I shall be able to provide for Aurora. The letter which I next opened, and which had been directed by a stranger, was from Aurora herself. "Some remains of pity," she observed, "which I still feel for you, notwithstanding your conduct towards me, pleads in your favour, and induces me to inform you that at the moment



you receive this letter, I shall be at the gates of Lyons. It is my intention to enter a convent, which will rid me of your hateful presence. I am an honourable enemy, and declare that you must hold yourself ready to appear before every tribunal in France till I have found one which shall do me the justice to break the chains of your victim, and punish the traitors by whom she has been sacrificed."

I shall not attempt to paint the violent and conflicting emotions which agitated my mind at the perusal of this letter. One moment I determined to pursue Aurora, to detain and force her to pay due obedience to a man whom fate had made her husband; the next, I felt the most invincible repugnance to persecute a woman whom I so ardently loved. The project also was impracticable. Aurora had already departed several hours; I must have sent for horses from Montelemart, or walked thither on foot; either would have required so much time that I renounced all hopes of overtaking Aurora, and only thought of contriving the means of leaving a place which served to recall so many bitter remembrances. I had still as much money left as would enable me to reach Lyons. Before my departure I interrogated severely the curé and his niece, with respect to their knowledge of my wife's escape. Threats and entreaties were lavished in vain; and though they were, as I have since discovered, the primary authors of the plot, it was impossible to bring them to any confession.

New embarrassments crowded upon me when I reached Lyons. Where begin my researches, how come to any knowledge, in a great city, of the asylum which Aurora had chosen! In what manner could I present myself before a father, amidst

the first transports of his indignation against the criminal deceiver of his daughter? How could I wander from one convent to another without the risk of being suspected from the nature of my inquiries, and exposing myself to the danger of a dungeon, where I might be plunged for having acted so shameful a part? In order to deliver myself from these perplexities, I had recourse to my friends the engravers, who all advised me to remain quiet, and wait peaceably till the procedure for breaking the marriage became the topic of general conversation at Lyons. I consented to follow their counsels, to forbear inquiries alike dangerous and useless, and to take measures for improving my fortune, too well convinced that this was the only chance of hereafter regaining the heart of Aurora.

Thanks to my generous friends, after having disposed advantageously of the jewels, lace, and other valuable articles, which were useless to me, I found myself in possession of near ten thousand crowns. It was reported at that time that we were on the eve of a war with some of the principal powers of Europe. In consequence of this information, and with the aid of my friends, I made one of those bold speculations, which, if it had not succeeded, would have placed me where I had set out, but which, by splendid success, increased more than threefold my capital.

While my commercial operations were going forward in profound secrecy, my story became the topic of public animadversion. The intrepid Aurora, from her monastic retreat, hurled her criminations against me and my confederates. This want of address on her part, in attacking the engravers, besides turning the laugh against herself,

was of infinite advantage to me, by throwing me in the background, while my friends were so much the more awake to my interests, as it was the best mode of defending their own. Aurora insisted peremptorily that the marriage should be annulled. The abbess of the convent in which she had found an asylum, and who was respected for her birth, as well as her good qualities, moved heaven and earth in her cause. Her father brought together his protectors and friends, and everything threatened us with a defeat—the shame of which would have fallen on the engravers, and the weight of it on myself. The wags amused themselves in seeing the pride of Aurora made the instrument of her punishment, but no smiles can smooth the brow of wrinkled and severe justice. Already a warrant to arrest me had been issued, from which I had only been saved by the obscurity in which I lived. The affair was brought before the courts with great rapidity.

My haughty enemy had requested guards to escort her to the tribunal in which our marriage was to be declared null or valid. She made her appearance arrayed in all her charms, which were still heightened by the semblance of the most unaffected modesty. Never had any cause assembled so immense a crowd of spectators. Aurora's counsel pleaded for her with so much eloquence that the tears of the auditory sometimes forced him to suspend his declamation. The emotion of the judges indicated what kind of sentence they were about to pronounce, and which the feelings of the audience were powerfully impelled to sanction, when the engraver, who had sought to be the husband of Aurora, seeing that no counsel arose to plead on my side of the question, requested

permission from the judges to enter on my defence. This request was immediately granted, that it might not be said I had been condemned unheard. He gave my history in a few words, in which nothing was exaggerated except the eulogium with which he honoured me. He owned, nevertheless, that the singular circumstances of my marriage would authorise the judges to declare it null and void. He hesitated for a moment. The most solemn silence reigned throughout the assembly; when, turning to Aurora, he added, in a firm tone of voice,

"No, madam, you are not the wife of the bellows-mender; but nature destines you to become the mother of his child! Listen to the powerful cry of the infant which you carry in your womb, and then say if you desire to become free while your child is condemned to the infamy of illegitimacy?"

"No, no!" exclaimed the trembling Aurora, bursting into a flood of tears; and the whole audience, weeping in sympathy with her, joined in the exclamation of "No, no!"

This cry of maternal tenderness decided the cause. The judges declared that the marriage was valid according to the contract, in which I had signed my true name, alleging also that our situations were not sufficiently unequal to authorise the dissolution of our union. But they wisely decreed, in order not to leave the adventurer too much cause for triumph, that my wife should be permitted to reside in the convent which she had chosen for her asylum; an injunction was laid on the husband, under certain penalties, neither to reclaim, pursue, or molest her in any manner whatever; that the child should be baptized under his name, but that

he should at no time have a right over its education. The rest of the sentence turned on objects of detail more interesting to gentlemen of the long robe than the historian. Aurora left the audience in triumph. The crowd escorted her to the convent, crowning her with eulogiums for the tender sacrifice which she had just made to the infant with which she was pregnant.

Such was the result of this celebrated trial, during the decision of which I was little at my ease. Obligated to hide myself from every eye, I took advantage of my not being known to glide among the crowd; no one conjecturing that the bellows-mender, of whose history they heard so much, wore decent clothes, fine linen, and was a personage in no mean circumstances. The most ridiculous stories were fabricated respecting my absence and my marriage. I sometimes endeavoured to laugh with the rest, but was horribly abashed to find that even those who amused themselves most at the expense of Aurora were virulent declaimers against what they called my infamy. Agreeably to the dictates of my own feelings, and in conformity to the advice of my friends, I determined to quit Lyons, and employ my funds in some other place, where my name and history were unknown. I made choice of Paris for my residence, where, amid an immense population, I could most easily escape observation, and also where I could employ my capital to most advantage. There the poor bellows-mender, with a hundred thousand *livres*, and the credit of his friends at Lyons, established a commercial house, which succeeded beyond all his hopes. I was, during five years, the favourite of fortune; and my conscience renders me this



testimony, that I had no reason to blush at any of my speculations.

My correspondence with Lyons was active. A happy accident gave me the means of rendering essential service to one of the first banking houses of that great city. The proprietors testified their boundless gratitude towards me, and pressed me so earnestly to pay them a visit, that the desire of yielding to their solicitations, together with the secret wish of breathing the same air as Aurora, led me to accept of the invitation. I made my appearance in Lyons with carriages, servants, and fine clothes, none of which were at this time borrowed. Fortune had so successfully laboured for me during five years, that I had the means of supporting a magnificent style of living.

My old friends scarcely recognised me; it may therefore be imagined that it was not a very difficult task to escape the penetration of my new acquaintances. Without appearing to annex the slightest importance to the subject, I sometimes talked of the celebrated trial which had interested the city of Lyons five years before, and terminated my question by cursorily inquiring what had become of Aurora and her family? I learned that her father had, lately died, that losses on the one hand and ostentation on the other, joined to the sums he had lavished on the education of his daughter, had left his affairs so embarrassed, that Aurora, at his decease, found herself almost without resource, and in some measure dependent on the benevolence of the abbess of the convent where she had taken refuge. I was also informed, that, although whenever Aurora appeared, she was still the object of general applause, she conducted herself with so much propriety, that she was not less

respected than admired. The bellows-mender, it was observed, had suffered her to remain tranquil since the trial, without attempting to reclaim his lost rights.

I did not listen to these recitals without the most lively emotion. During five years' residence in the capital, young and ambitious, as well as deeply enamoured of Aurora, the ardour of my efforts to acquire a fortune which might give me the right of reclaiming her I loved, had absorbed my mind; but my abode at Lyons, and the unsuspected testimony of all with whom I conversed in favour of my wife, awakened every latent sentiment of tenderness in my bosom. The image of Aurora, of her whom I had deceived, but whom I adored, again occupied every thought of my soul: again throbbed in every pulse! I felt how worthless was the acquisition of wealth which she refused to share. I felt that she was necessary to my existence!—and my child—was I never to fold it in my arms?—never to feel the endearments of it who owed to me life? never to know those parental transports, which, although I had not experienced, my heart told me must be exquisite? I could bear these cruel reflections no longer. I determined to behold Aurora and my child.

One of the engravers, by my orders, assembled her father's creditors and discharged all his debts, purchasing for me at the same time, certain pieces of furniture to which long habit had associated an idea of value in the mind of Aurora: this was the least difficult part of my enterprise.

The merchant who had given me so satisfactory an account of Aurora, was a man generally esteemed. It struck me that I might choose him

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for my confidant, and advise with him what plan I should pursue. I knew that his name alone was sufficient to smooth every obstacle in my path. He was in possession of a beautiful pavilion on the banks of the Rhone. I requested an interview in the most solitary walk of his grounds, and having obtained his promise of inviolable secrecy,

"You have hitherto," said I, "seen in your friend a merchant, who, still young, owes to his talents and his probity, an affluent and honourable position. It has been my fate to appear in a mask to the eyes of those whose esteem I most value. I have deceived my mistress, let me no longer impose upon my friend. You have spoken to me of Aurora in a manner the most favourable; you know the half of her history—hear the remainder. You see before you the unfortunate bellows-mender, chosen by a set of young wags as the instrument of their vengeance."

At this unexpected declaration, my friend started back with surprise. It was easy for me to read on his countenance the sensations which agitated his mind.

"I am indebted," continued I, "to nature for some talents, which I have improved by self-education and study; the generosity of my employers and fortune have done the rest. I am, as you know, about to leave Lyons; but I am firmly decided not to depart without Aurora. You enjoy the esteem and confidence of the public; you will be the mediator of your friend with her, and I shall owe my happiness to your intervention."

The banker, when he recovered from his astonishment, assured me that he had no doubt of effecting the reconciliation I so ardently desired. "The abbess of the convent where Aurora resides,"

said he, "honours me with a certain degree of friendship ; it is not late, we are near Lyons, let us order horses and we shall soon be able to arrange with Aurora herself the points which seem to you, at present, so embarrassing."

I adopted this project with fond avidity. I was now no less eager for an interview than I had once been anxious to avoid it. I thirsted with impatience to gaze upon Aurora and my child.

The merchant was announced at the convent under his real name, and myself as the principal of a great commercial house at Paris. We were admitted. Ah, what a picture presented itself to my view ! Aurora, the enchanting Aurora, in all the pride of a beauty of twenty-three years of age, occupied a seat near the venerable abbess. A lovely child slept upon her knees, and seemed so entirely to absorb all the attention of its mother, that she scarcely thought of returning the usual salutations. The first instant that she threw her eyes on me, I remarked distinctly, from her involuntary starting, that my presence recalled some disagreeable idea ; but introduced by a man whom she well knew, and who was honoured with general esteem, and presented as the principal of a commercial house in Paris, those circumstances, together with the shade of twilight, so completely set all conjectures at fault, that Aurora was far from recollecting her husband in the stranger. My friend opened the conversation by some vague observations ; spoke of my speedy departure for Paris, mentioned my having connexions with all the great houses of the capital, and requested to know if the abbess had any orders with which to honour me.

While this conversation passed, the infant

awoke, and the sight of strangers, instead of surprising him, led him to smile. After having looked at us both with a kind of hesitation, it was towards me that he advanced. Imagine my feeling when I found myself covered with the sweet caresses, the innocent kisses of my child! An emotion which I had no power to subdue, made me eagerly seize him in my arms, and throwing myself with him at the feet of my pale and trembling wife—

“Aurora! Aurora!” I exclaimed, “your child, your child claims from you a father! Will you suffer affection for ever to be vanquished by pride?”

While I uttered these words, in a voice half choked by emotion, Aurora quivered, seemed ready to faint, and fixed her wandering eyes alternately on me, and on her child, who clung to her knees, and seemed to implore forgiveness for his father. At length a torrent of tears bathed Aurora’s face. The child, unable to comprehend why his mother wept, joined his plaintive cries to mine.

“Pardon! pardon!” I exclaimed.

Aurora’s only answer was to throw herself into my arms. “I know not,” she sobbed, “whether you again deceive me, but your child pleads too powerfully. Aurora is yours.” She pressed me against her palpitating heart. We were unable for a long time to speak. Our uncontrollable emotion—the caresses of the child—the tears of my friend—the place itself—everything served to add to our delirium.

“My children,” said the abbess, looking at us with an eye moistened by affection, “you have both performed your duty. Monsieur is too much affected to be a knave; Aurora has too much the



heart of a mother to live any longer the victim of foolish pride. May this marriage, which you solemnly renew in my presence, be more lasting than the first. May you enjoy that lasting felicity which belongs only to virtue !”

These words, pronounced in a serious tone of voice, calmed our turbulent sensations. I related my history in its full extent, without sparing the confession of my faults, and the feelings of my remorse. I failed not to remark with transport that the hand of Aurora often pressed mine while I spoke of my projects of tenderness, although she testified neither pleasure nor pain when I mentioned the fortunate situation of my affairs. The part of my narration which most affected her was that which regarded the payment of her father's debts, and my attention to her feelings in saving from the hands of the creditors the pieces of furniture to which she had been accustomed from her infancy.

My friend celebrated our conjugal reconciliation by a *fête*. Near his pavilion stood a house delightfully situate, and which the heirs of the proprietor, who had lately died, had announced their intention of selling. A word which involuntarily escaped Aurora discovered to me that this acquisition would be agreeable to her. I made the purchase in her name, and twenty-four hours after I put into her hands the papers which left it entirely at her own disposal.

I returned with Aurora and our child to Paris. Whether from some remains of her former haughtiness, or from real greatness of mind, she expressed no surprise at finding herself mistress of a house decorated with the utmost taste and magnificence.

I found her character much ameliorated by adversity. I found myself beloved by her who was now the object of my affection.

One happy year had elapsed when Aurora entered my cabinet, her eyes sparkling with joy—

“My dear,” said she, “you will not refuse the invitation of your wife. I wish to give you a dinner in my house at Lyons. No objection! This very morning I am going to set off with my son. I want to teach him how a son ought to do his father the honours of his house.”

I did not fail to arrive at Lyons at the appointed time. The day had scarcely dawned when I found Aurora under arms. She was still in all the splendour of her beauty, and had adorned herself with more than her accustomed elegance. Dinner was announced, and judge of my sensations when Aurora, giving me her hand, led me into an apartment which had been decorated by the graces themselves, and who were the guests she had assembled? My friends the engravers! My first friends. The authors of my fortune, of my marriage. I cannot paint my emotion! During the repast, the gaiety of Aurora animated all her guests with delight and admiration. After the dessert, she led us into the apartment which she had destined for me. A slight spring, touched by Aurora, withdrew a curtain, which concealed two pictures, finely painted. We drew near to survey them.

“Oh! enchantress!” exclaimed my friends, together with myself.

The first represented the village scene near Montelemart. I was kneeling at the feet of Aurora, who repulsed me with disdain, throwing a

look of indignation on the coachman-engraver.  
Underneath was written,

LOVE CONQUERED BY PRIDE.

The second picture represented the scene of the present day—my ten friends at table—Aurora placed between her happy husband and the coachman-engraver, and appearing to smile on both. At the bottom was written,

PRIDE CONQUERED BY LOVE.

Here finishes my history. My present happiness I can feel better than define. Aurora made me the father of three other children, and requested that the first of them should have for his godfather the engraver whose hand she had refused. He is now the happy husband of a charming woman, well known in Lyons for the care which she bestows on the education of her only daughter. Aurora tells me that she shall not be completely happy till this young girl calls her mother; and what is singular in this affair is, that my son is of the same opinion.

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## The Man who Owned he was a Fool.

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DR Thevenet, a distinguished surgeon at Calais, one day received a note without signature, requesting him to repair to a hotel not far off, with such instruments as were necessary for an amputation. Thevenet was somewhat surprised at the manner of the invitation, but concluding that it was the work of some wag, paid no regard to it. Three days after he received a second invitation still more pressing, and containing the information that the next day at nine o'clock a carriage would stop before his house in order to convey him. Thevenet resolved to let the affair take its course, and when, on the following day, at the striking of the clock, an elegant carriage stopped before the door, he seated himself on it, and asked the driver to whom he was to carry him?

The driver replied in English—"What I do not know I cannot tell."

At length the carriage stopped before the door of the hotel. A handsome young man, of about twenty-eight years of age, received the surgeon at

the door, and conducted him up-stairs into a large chamber, where the following conversation took place:—

*Thevenet.* You have sent for me ?

*Englishman.* I am much obliged to you for the trouble you have taken to visit me. Here is coffee, chocolate, or wine, if you would take anything before the operation.

*Thev.* Show me the patient, sir ; I must first ascertain whether the injury is such as to render an amputation necessary.

*Eng.* It is necessary. Doctor, seat yourself ; I have perfect confidence in you—listen to me. Here is a purse of one hundred guineas ; this is the pay you will receive for the operation. If done successfully, it is yours. Should you refuse to comply with my wishes, see, here is a loaded pistol. You are in my power ; I will shoot you.

*Thev.* Sir, I am not afraid of your pistols. But what is your particular desire ? Tell me without preamble.

*Eng.* You must cut off my right leg.

*Thev.* With all my heart ; and, if you please, your head too. But the leg is sound. You sprang up-stairs just now with the agility of a dancing-master. What ails your leg ?

*Eng.* Nothing. I only want it off.

*Thev.* Sir, you are a fool.

*Eng.* Why does that trouble you, Thevenet ?

*Thev.* What sin has the leg committed ?

*Eng.* None ; but are you ready to take it off ?

*Thev.* Sir, I do not know. Bring me evidence that you are sound of mind.

*Eng.* Will you comply with my request ?

*Thev.* Yes, sir, so soon as you give me sufficient reasons for such mutilation of yourself.



*Eng.* I cannot tell you the truth, perhaps, for some years; but I will lay a wager that after a certain time you shall understand that my reasons are most noble—that my happiness, my very existence, depend upon my being freed from this leg.

*Thev.* Sir, I lay no wagers. Tell me your name, residence, family, and occupation.

*Eng.* You shall know all that hereafter. Do you take me for an honourable man?

*Thev.* I cannot. A man of honour does not threaten his physician with pistols. I have duties towards you as a stranger. I will not mutilate you. If you wish to be the murderer of a guiltless father of a family, then shoot.

*Eng.* Well, Mr Thevenet, I will not shoot you; but I will force you to take off my leg. What you will not for the love of money, nor the fear of a bullet, you shall do for compassion.

*Thev.* And how so?

*Eng.* I will break my leg by discharging my pistols, and here before your eyes.

The Englishman seated himself, and placed the mouth of the pistol close to his knee. Thevenet was on the point of springing to prevent him, but he exclaimed—

“Stir not, or I fire! Now,” said he, “will you increase and lengthen out my pains for nothing?”

“You are a fool,” says Thevenet, “but it shall be done. I will take off the unfortunate leg.”

The Englishman calmly laid by the pistol, and all was made ready for the operation. As soon as the surgeon began to cut, the Englishman lighted his pipe, and swore it should not go out. He kept his word. The leg lay upon the floor, and the Englishman was still smoking. Thevenet did his work

like a master ; the wound, by his skill, and the patient's own good nature, was healed at a fixed time. He rewarded the surgeon like a king, and thanked him with tears of joy for the loss of his leg, and sallied over the streets with a wooden one. About eight weeks after his departure, Thevenet received a letter from England with the following contents:—

“ You will receive enclosed, as a proof of my most heartfelt gratitude, an order for two hundred and fifty guineas upon Mons. Panchard in Paris. You have made me the happiest mortal on earth in depriving me of my leg, for it was the only hindrance to my earthly felicity. Brave man, you may now know the cause of my foolish humour as you called it.

“ You concluded, at the time, that there could be no reasonable ground for such self-mutilation. I offered to lay a wager ; you did well in not accepting it. After my second return from the East Indies, I became acquainted with Emilie Harley, the most perfect of women. I loved her most passionately. Her wealth, her family connexions, influenced my friends in her favour ; but I was influenced only by her beauty and her noble heart. I joined the number of her admirers. Ah ! excellent Thevenet, I was so fortunate as to gain her affections. She loved me above all—made no secret of it—but she still rejected me. I sought her hand in vain ; in vain I implored her parents and her friends to intercede for me. She was still immovable. For a long time I was unable to conjecture the cause of her refusing me ; since, as she confessed herself, she loved me almost to distraction. One of her visitors at length betrayed to me the secret. Miss

Harley was a wonder of beauty, but she had only one leg; and, on account of this imperfection, she feared to become my wife, lest I should esteem her the less for it. My resolution was taken. I resolved to become like her; thanks to you I became so. I came with my wooden leg to London, and in the first place visited Miss Harley. It had been reported, and I myself had written to England, that by a fall from a horse I had broken my leg, which was consequently taken off. It was much regretted. Emilie fell into a swoon the first time she saw me. She was for a long time inconsolable, but now she is my wife. The first day after our marriage I intrusted to her the secret of what a sacrifice I had made in consequence of my wish to obtain her hand. She loves me now the more affectionately. Oh, my brave Thevenet! had I ten legs to lose, I would, without a single contortion of feature, part with them all for my Emilie. So long as I live I will be grateful to you. Come to London—visit us—become acquainted with my wife, and then say I was a fool.

“CHARLES TEMPLE, BART.”

*Answer of Dr Thevenet.*

“SIR,—I thank you for your valuable present; for so I must call it, because I cannot consider it as reward for the little trouble I was at. I congratulate you on your marriage with a woman so worthy of your affections. It is true a leg is much to lose, even for a beautiful, virtuous, and affectionate wife—but not too much. To gain possession of Eve, Adam was obliged to part with a rib; and beautiful women have cost some men their heads. But, after all, permit me to adhere to my former judg-

ment, Truly, for the moment you were correct, but with this difference; the correctness of my judgment was founded on long experience, as every truth should be, which we are not disposed to acknowledge. Sir, mind me, I lay a wager, that after two years you repent that your leg was taken off above the knee. You will find that below the knee had been enough. After three years you will be convinced that the loss of the foot had been sufficient. After four years, you conclude that the sacrifice of the great toe, and after five years, of the little toe, had been too much. After six years, you will agree with me that the paring of a nail had been enough. But I do not say this in prejudice of the merits of your charming wife. In my youth I devoted myself to love, but I have never parted with a leg. Had I done so, I should, at this day, have said, 'Thevenet, thou wast a fool.'—I have the honour to be, yours, &c.

"LEWIS THEVENET."

Eleven years after, during the horrors of the Revolution, Thevenet, whom a person that envied his reputation caused to be suspected of aristocracy, fled to London to save himself from the guillotine. He inquired after Sir Charles Temple, and was shown his house. He made himself known, and was received. In an arm-chair by the fire, surrounded by twenty newspapers, sat a corpulent man, who could hardly stand up, he was so unwieldy.

"Ah, welcome, doctor," cried the corpulent man, who was no other than Sir Charles Temple; "excuse me if I do not rise. This cursed leg is a hindrance to me in everything. You have come to see if your judgment was correct."

"I come as a fugitive, and seek your protection."

"You shall have it with pleasure. You must live with me from this day, for truly you are a wise man. You must console me. Surely, Thevenet, probably I had been an admiral of the blue, had not my wooden leg disqualified me from the service of my country. When I read the gazettes, the brown and the blue make me angry, because I can have nothing to do with them. Come, console me."

"Your wife can do that better than I."

"Say nothing of her. Her wooden leg prevented her dancing, so she betook herself to cards and to fashion. There is no such thing as living peaceably with her."

"What! was my judgment correct, then?"

"Oh, welcome, beloved Thevenet; but be silent on the point. It was a silly adventure. Had I my leg again, I would not now give the pairing of a nail. Between you and me, I was a fool, but keep this to yourself."



## The Diamond Eyes.

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WHEN I entered Edinburgh College the students were tolerably free from any of those clubs or parties into which some factitious subject—often a whim—divides them. In the prior year the spirit of wager had seized a great number of them with the harpy talons of the demon of gambling, giving rise to consequences prejudicial to their morals, as well as to their studies. A great deal of money among the richer of them changed hands upon the result of bets, often the most frivolous, if not altogether ridiculous. Now, we are not to say that, abstracted from the love of money, the act of betting is unqualifiedly bad, if rather we may not be able to say something for it, insomuch, as it sometimes brings out, and stamps ingenuity or sagacity, while it represses and chastises arrogance. But the practice at the College at that time was actually wild. They sought out subjects; the ay and the no of ordinary converse was followed by the gauntlet, which was taken up on the instant; and they had even an umpire in the club, a respectable young man of the name of Hamley, who was too wise to bet himself, but who was pleased with the honour of being privileged to decide the bets of the others.

In the heat of this wild enthusiasm, it happened that two of these youths, one called Henry Dunnet, and the other Frank Hamilton, were walking on the jetty which runs out from the harbour of Leith a full mile into the Forth. Dunnet was the son of a West India planter, who allowed him £300 a year, every penny of which was spent in paying only a part of his bills long before the year was done; one of which bills I had an opportunity of seeing, to my wonder—how any one could eat £15 worth of tarts and sweetmeats in the course of not many months! Hamilton was the son of a west country proprietor, and enjoyed the privilege of using, to his ruin, a yearly allowance of £250. In the midst of their sauntering they hailed two of their friends,—one Campbell, a sworn companion of the young West Indian; and the other Cameron, as closely allied to Hamilton,—all the four being, as the saying goes, “birds of a feather,” tossing their wings in the gale of sprees, and not always sleeping in their own nests at night.

As they approached the end of the jetty, they met a lad, who had wounded one of these large gulls, called Tom Norries,—a beautiful creature, with its fine lead-coloured wings, and charming snow-white breast, and eye like a diamond.

“I will give you a shilling for the bird,” said Dunnet.

“But what are you to do with it?” replied the lad. “I would not like it to be killed. It is only hurt in the wing, and I will get half-a-crown for it from one who has a garden to keep it in.”

“No, no,” said Dunnet, “I’ll not kill it. Here’s your half-crown.”

And the bargain was struck. Dunnet, with the struggling bird in his hand, went down, followed

by his friends, one of the side stairs to the stone rampart, by which the jetty is defended on the east. There they sat down. The sun was throwing a blaze of glory over a sea which repaid the gift with a liquid splendour scarcely inferior to his of fire; and the companions of the bird, swirling in the clear air, seemed to be attracted by the sharp cries of the prisoner, but all its efforts were vain to gratify its love of liberty and their yearning. It was in the hands of those who had neither pity for its sufferings, consideration for the lessons it carried in its structure, nor taste for estimating its beauties. One of another kind of students might have detected adaptations in the structure of that creature sufficient to have raised his thoughts to the great Author of design, and the source of all beauty,—that small and light body, capable of being suspended for a great length of time in the air by those broad wings, so that, as a bird of prey, it should watch for its food without the aid of a perch; the feathers, supplied by an unctuous substance, to enable them to throw off the water and keep the body dry; the web-feet for swimming; and the long-legs, which it uses as a kind of stay, by turning them towards the head when it bends the neck, to apply the beak—that beak, too, so admirably formed—for taking up entire, or perforating the backs of the silly fishes that gambol too near the surface. Ay, even in these fishes which, venturing too far from their natural depths, and becoming amorous of the sun, and playful in their escapades, he might see the symbol of man himself, who, when he leaves the paths of prudence, and gets top-light with pleasure, is ready, in every culmination of his delirium, to be caught by a waiting retribution. Ah! but our student,

who held the bird, was not incurious—only cold and cruel in his curiosity.

"Hamilton," said he, "that bird could still swim on the surface of that sea, though deprived of every feather on its body."

"I deny it," replied Hamilton. "It will not swim five minutes."

"What will you bet?"

"Five pounds."

"Done."

And getting Campbell to hold the beak, which the bird was using with all its vigour, he grasped its legs and wings together by his left hand, and began to tear from the tender, living skin the feathers. Every handful showed the quivering flesh, and was followed by spouts of blood; nor did he seem to care—although the more carefully the flaying operation was performed, the better chance he had of carrying his wager—whether he brought away with the torn tips portions of the skin. The writhing of the tortured creature was rather an appeal to his deliberate cruelty, and the shrill scream only quickened the process. The back finished and bloody, the belly, snow-white and beautiful, was turned up, the feathers torn away, the breast laid bare, and one wing after the other stript of every pinion. Nothing in the shape of feathers, in short, was left, except the covering of the head, which resisted his fingers.

"There now is Plato's definition of a man personified," said he, as he laughed.

During all this time a lady looked over the parapet. Dunnet caught her eye red with anger, but he only laughed the louder.

"Now, Hamilton," said he, "you take the bird, and we mount to the platform. When I give the

sign, fling him in, and we shall see how the bet goes."

They accordingly mounted, and the lady, turning her back, as if she had been unable to bear longer the sight of so much cold cruelty, directed her vision towards the west; but a little boy, who was along with her, seemed to watch the operation.

"Now," cried Dunnet.

Hamilton threw the bird into the sea. The creature, still living, true to its old instinct, spread out its bare wings in an attempt to fly, but it was in vain; down it came sinking below the surface, but rising quickly again to lash, with the bleeding wings, the water on which it used to swim so lightly and elegantly. The struggle between the effort to fly and the tendency to sink was continued for several minutes, its screams bringing closer around it many of its compeers, who looked as if with pity and amazement on the suffering victim, known to them now only by the well-known cry of distress.

Meanwhile these curious students of natural history stood looking over the rail, watch in hand, and the little boy, an important personage in our story, also intent upon the experiment, cried out two solitary words, very simple ones too, and yet fraught with a strange import, as regards consequences, that could not be gathered from them.

"See, ma."

But the lady to whom they were addressed had still her head turned away.

"Six minutes," cried Dunnet. "The time is up, and the bird is only this instant down. I win."

"I admit it," responded Hamilton, evidently disconcerted. "I shall pay you to-night. I got my remittance yesterday."



"Content," said Dunnet. "That's the third bet I have gained off you within a fortnight."

Hamilton bit his lip and scowled—an act which only roused against him the raillery of his comrades, who were now collected in a circle, and symptoms of anger of a more expressive kind showed themselves.

"You have been at this trade of flaying before," said he, looking sternly at Dunnet. "Your father, like the other West Indians, is well acquainted with the flaying of negroes, and you have been following his example with the Jamaica lungies. But," he added, getting angry, "next time we cross the rapiers of a bet, it shall be for ten times five."

"This instant," answered Dunnet, on whom the imputations about his father acted as a fiery stimulant.

"Seek your subject," responded Hamilton.

"You see that lady there?" continued the West Indian. "She has a boy with her."

"I do."

"The mother of the boy or not?" continued Dunnet. "I say she is; and, in place of fifty, I'll make it a hundred."

"Have you ever seen them before?" asked Hamilton, trying to be calm.

"Never. I know no more of them than you do, and, besides, I give you your choice of mother, or not mother."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Campbell. "Are you mad, Dunnet? Has your last triumph blinded you? The woman is too old by ten years."

Hamilton turned round without saying a word, and drew cautiously near the lady, whose eyes, as she stood looking at a foreign ship coming in, were

still scornful, and it seemed as if she waited until some gentleman came up to inform him of the cruel act she had so recently witnessed. Resisting her fiery glances, he surveyed her calmly, looking by turns at her and the boy. A slight smile played on his lip in the midst of the indications of his wrath. One might have read in that expression—

“Not a feature in these two faces in the least similar, and the age is beyond all mortal doubt. I have the gull-flayer on the hip at last.”

And returning to the companions with the same simulated coolness—

“Done for a hundred,” he said. “That lady is not the mother of that boy.”

“Agreed,” answered Dunnet, with a look of inward triumph. “How to be decided?”

“By the lips of the lady herself.”

“Agreed.”

“Yes,” joined Campbell, “if you can get these lips to move. She looks angry, and now she is moving along probably for home, bequeathing to us the last look of her scorn. We shall give her time to cool down, and Cameron and I will then pay our respects to her. We shall get it out of the boy if she refuse to answer.”

It was as Campbell said. The lady with the boy, who held her by the hand, had begun her return along the jetty. The companions kept walking behind; and of these, Campbell and Dunnet fell back a little from the other two.

“Hark, Campbell,” said Dunnet. “Back me against Cameron for any sum you can get out of him. I’m sure of my quarry; and,” laughing within the teeth, he added, “I’ll gull him again.”

“You’re ruined, man,” whispered his com-

panion. "The woman is evidently too old, and I am satisfied you will catch some of her wrinkles."

A deeper whisper from Dunnet conveyed to the ear of his friend—

"I heard the boy call her mother."

"The devil!" exclaimed Campbell in surprise; but, catching himself—"it might have been grandmother he meant."

"No, no. Children in Scotland use grandma'; never ma', to grandmother. I'm satisfied; and, if you are not a fool, take advantage of my"—

"Dishonesty," added Campbell.

"No; all fair with that fellow Hamilton. Besides, all bets assume a retention of reasons, otherwise there could be no bets. In addition, I did not assert that I did not hear them address each other."

"That's something," said Campbell. "I do not say it is impossible, or even very improbable, that she may be the mother; and if you will assure me, on your honour, of what you heard, I will have a little speculative speculation on Cameron."

"I can swear; and if I couldn't, do you think I would have bet so high, as in the event of losing I should be ruined?"

"I'm content," said Campbell. "Ho, there, Cameron! I will back Dunnet on the maternity for ten."

"That will just pay my tailor," replied Cameron. "I accept. Now for the grand *denouement*. Let us accost the arbitress of our fortunes."

"Not yet," said Hamilton. "Wait till she gets to the lighthouse, where there are people. It is clear she has not a good opinion of us, and in this solitary place she might get alarmed."

Hanging back to wait their opportunity, now

upon the verge of a decision which might be attended with disastrous results to some of them, the whole four appeared absorbed in anxiety. Not a word was spoken; and it seemed possible that, during these trying minutes, a hint would have broken up the imprudent and dangerous compact. The terror of the club was before them, and the false honour which ruled them, in place of obedience to their fathers and humanity to dumb creatures, retained the ascendancy. So has it ever been with the worship of false gods: their exactions have always been in proportion to the folly and credulity of their votaries. The moment was approaching. The die was to carry formidable issues. Dark shadows broke in through the resolution to be brave, as might have been observed in the features of both the principals. At length Campbell took the lead. They approached the lady, who, at first, seemed to shrink from them as monsters.

"We beg pardon," he said. "Be assured, madam, we have not the most distant intention to offend you. The truth is, that we have a bet among us as to whether you are the mother of this fine boy. We assure you, moreover, that it was the sport of betting that sought out the subject, and the nature of that subject cannot, we presume, be prejudicial either to your honour or your feelings. While I ask your pardon, allow me to add that the wager, foolish or not, is to be decided by your answer, yes or no."

"No."

After pronouncing with a severe sternness, this monosyllable, she paused a little; and looking round upon the youths with a seriousness and dignity that sat upon her so well that they shrunk from her

glance, she added, with a corresponding solemnity—

“Would to God, who sees all things—ay, and punishes all those who are cruel to the creatures He has formed with feelings suitable to their natures, and dear to them as ours are to us—that he who bet upon my being the mother of this boy may be he who tortured the unoffending bird!”

And, with these words, she departed, leaving the bewildered students looking at each other, with various emotions. It was, perhaps, fortunate for Dunnet that the little sermon, contrary to the practice of the courts, came after, in place of preceding the condemnation, for he had been rendered all but insensible by the formidable monosyllable. He saw there was some mystery overhanging his present position. He doubted, and he did not doubt the lady; but he heard the boy use the word, and he took up the impression that he was, by some mistake on his part, to be punished for the flaying of the bird. The lady's eye, red and angry, had been fixed upon him, and now, when she was gone, he still saw it. But there were more lurid lights, playing round certain stern facts connected with his fortunes. He must pay this £100 on the decision of her who had burned him with her scorn. There was no relief for him. The club at the College had no mercy, and he had enraged Hamilton, whose spirit was relentless. He had been under rebuke from his father, who had threatened to cut him off; and, worse still, the remnant of the last yearly remittance was £110 in the Royal Bank, while debts stood against him in the books of tailors, confectioners, tavern-keepers, shoemakers—some already in the form of decrees, and one, at



least, in the advanced stage of a warrant. To sum up all, he was betrothed to Miss Mitchell, the sister of a solicitor, who had already hinted doubts as to the propriety of the marriage. He saw himself, in short, wrecked on the razor-backed shelving rocks of misery. In his extremity, he clutched at a floating weed; the woman, the lady, did not speak the truth. He had ears, and could hear, and he would trust to them. The boy could not be wrong.

"Campbell," he cried, "dog her home—she lies!" Hamilton and Cameron burst out into a laugh, but Campbell had been taken aback by the lady's answer: he had not £10 to pay Cameron, and the fear of the club was before him, with its stern decree of the brand of caste and rejection by his associates. Since the moment of the lady's answer, he had been conscious of obscure doubts as to her truthfulness, clustering round the suspicion that she might have known, by hearing something, that Dunnet, the gull-flayer, was on the side of the maternity, and that she wanted to punish him—a notion which seemed to be favoured by the somewhat affected manner of her expressing her little sermon. These doubts, fluid and wavering, became, as it were, crystallised by Dunnet's cry that she was a liar; and, the moment he felt the sharp angles of the idea, he set off after the lady.

This hope, which was nothing more than despair in hysterics, enabled Dunnet to withstand, for a little, the looks of triumph in Hamilton and Cameron, in spite of their laugh, which still rung in his ears. The sermon had touched him but little, and if he could have got quit of this wildly contracted debt, he would likely be the same man again. He did not, as yet, feel even the dishonour of having

taken advantage of the boy's statement—an act which he had subtlety enough to defend. Give him only relief from this debt, the fire of the club, the stabbing glances of Hamilton's eye. At least he was not bound to suffer the personal expression of his companions' triumph any longer than he could away.

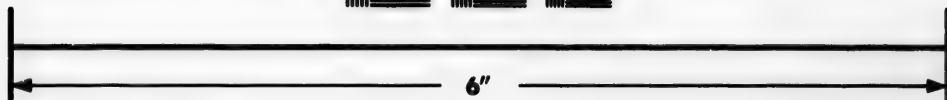
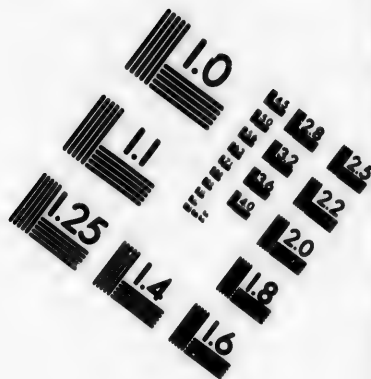
"We will wait the issue of Campbell's inquiry," he said, with affected calmness. "I have a call to make in the Links."

And he was retreating, even as he uttered these words.

"I owe you £5," cried Hamilton, "which, *as a man of honour*, I pay you to-night, at seven o'clock, upon the instant, at Stewart's. I have no wish to be dragged before the club."

With this barb, Dunnet hurried away, to make no call. He was hard to subdue, and a puppy, whose passion it was to strut, in the perfection of a refined toilette, among fashionable street-walkers. While he was abroad, his cares rankling within were overborne by the consciousness of being "in position." The dog's nose is cold even when his tongue is reeking; and, as he walked slowly along, his exterior showed the proper thermometric nonchalance—it was not the time for a pyrometric measurement within the heart. On his way, he talked to a Leith merchant, who hailed him—yet he exhibited the required *retinu*, so expressive of confidence and ease within, and, withal, so fashionable. You might have said he had the heart to wing a partridge,—to "wing it," a pretty phrase in the mouth of a polite sportsman, who, if a poacher were to break the bones of his leg, would, in his own case, think it a little different. Yes, Dunnet might have been supposed to be





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able to "wing a partridge,"—not to "flay a gull."

It was while thus "in position"—not its master, but its slave—that curvation of the spine of society, which produces so much paralysis and death—that, when he came to Princes Street, he felt himself constrained and able to walk up South St Andrew Street, direct to the door of the Royal Bank. He even entered, he even drew a draft, he even made that draft £110, all the money he had there in keeping for so many coming wants and exigencies: he even presented it to the teller, who knew his circumstances and his dangers—ay, and his father's anxieties while he sent the yearly remittance.

"All, Mr Dunnet?" said the teller, looking blank at the draft.

"All, sir—I require it all," answered the student. The teller gave his head a significant shake.

Having got the money, he was more than ever under the law of that proclivity, on the broad line to ruin, on which so many young men take stations; and, still retaining his, he went, at the hour of the hot joints, to dine at Stewart's, where he met many others, in that house, of the same class, who, like himself, considered—that is, while the money was there—that guineas in the purse supersede the necessity of having ideas in the head. He took to such liquid accompaniments of the dinner, as would confirm the resolution he had formed, of paying at once his debt of honour. And why not? Was not he of that world, whose code of laws draws the legitimate line of distinction between debts contracted to industrious tradesmen, for the necessities of life, and those which are the result of whim, pride, or vindictiveness? All recollections of the

flaying of the bird, and of the lady's adjuration to Heaven, had given way to the enthusiasm of the noble feeling to obey the dictates of that immutable code of honour. And by seven o'clock he was at Stewart's, where he found Hamilton and Cameron waiting for their respective "pounds of flesh."

"Here is the £5," cried Hamilton, as he entered; and, throwing the note upon the table, "It is for the gull trick."

"And here," responded the West Indian, "is your £100 for the woman trick."

And he cast from him the bundle of notes, with a grandeur of both honour and defiance. "But I have a reservation to make. Campbell has not reported to me the issue of his commission, and if it shall turn out that the woman retracts, I will reclaim the money."

"And get it, too," said the other, laughing sneeringly, as he counted the notes—"but here comes Campbell."

"Campbell," cried Cameron, as his debtor entered, "I want my £10, to pay Nightingale."

"Ask Dunnet," said Campbell. "I have been cheated by him. He told me a lie. The woman speaks true, and I shall be revenged."

"I have nothing to do with Dunnet," answered Cameron. "You are my debtor; and, if I don't get the money to-night—you know my lodgings—the club will decide upon it to-morrow."

And, throwing a withering look upon his old friend—a word now changed for, and lost in that expressive vocable, debtor—he hurried out, followed by Hamilton, who had both his money and his revenge, and wished to be beyond the reach of a recall.

Left to themselves, the two remaining friends—

of the hour before, but now no longer friends—looked sternly at each other. The one considered himself duped—the other was burning under the imputation of being a cheat and a liar.

“Oh, I don’t retract,” said Campbell, with increased fierceness. “It was upon the faith of your word that I ventured the bet against my own convictions. I have traced the lady to Great King Street, where she resides, as the aunt of the boy; and I am satisfied that, in a case where the boy’s mother is alive, and now in her own house, he, of the age he is, never could have used the word mother, or mamma, or any word of that import, to his father’s sister. All power and energies are comparative. This £10 cracks the spine of my fortune as effectually as ten times the amount. I have not the money, and know no more where to find it, than I do to get hold of the philosopher’s stone. I repeat, I have been cheated, and I demand of you the money.”

“Which you shall never get,” replied Dunnet. “I can swear that I heard the words. They thrill on my ears now; and the best proof of my conviction is, that I am myself ruined. Yes,” and he began to roll his eyes about, as the terrors of his situation came rushing upon him. “Yes, the swell, the fop, the leader of the college *ton*, whose coat came from the artistic study of Willis, whose necktie could raise a *furor*, whose glove, without a wrinkle, would condescend only to be touched by friendship on the tip of the finger, is now at the mercy of any one of twenty miserable tradesmen, who can tell the sheriff I owe them money. Money! why, I have only fifteen pounds in the wide world, and I must pay that to my landlady.”

As he uttered these last words, the door opened,

and there stood before him a man with a blue coat, surmounted by a red collar. He held a paper in his hand; his demeanour was deferential, and exuberantly polite.

"That sum you have mentioned, sir," he said, looking to the student, "with £10 added, will save you and me much trouble. The debt to Mr Reid is £25; and here is certain paper which gives me the power to do an unpolite thing. You comprehend? I am an advocate for painless operations."

"Will you accept the £15?" said Dunnet, now scarcely able to articulate.

"Yes, if this gentleman, here, who is, I presume, your friend, will kindly add the £10. The expenses may stand."

Campbell could only grin at this strange conversation.

"Unwilling?" continued the messenger. "Ah, I see. It is strange that when I devote myself to a gentleman, his friends fly away. This is my misfortune. Well, there is no help for it. We must take a walk to the prison," addressing himself to his debtor. "You are a gentleman, and I shall be your servant, in livery."

Dunnet braced himself with a violent effort, like a spasm, and took his hat.

"Give me the £10," said Campbell. "It will make no difference now. There are no degrees in despair."

"I must take care of my master's money," said the officer, with an attempt at a smile; he added, "and now, sir, I am at your humble service."

In a very short time after, the strange events of that day were terminated by the young man being placed in the debtors' prison. Like other jail

birds, he at first shunned his brethren in misfortune—fleeing to his room, and shrouding himself in solitude and partial darkness. The change from a life of gaiety, if not dissipation, to the experiences of prison squalor, had come upon him without preparation—if, indeed, preparation for evil ever diminishes or much ameliorates the inevitable effects of the visitation. Unfortunates exhibit wonderful diversities in their manifestations. Dunnet became dejected, broken in spirits, sad, and remorseful. He scarcely stirred from the bed on which he had thrown himself when he entered; and his mind became a theatre, where strange plays were acted, and strange personages performed strange parts, under the direction of stage managers over whom he had no control. Though some unhappy predecessor, in the same cell, had scribbled on the wall—

“A prison is a cannie place,  
Though view'd with reprobation;  
Where cheats and thieves, and scants o' grace,  
Find time for cogitation;”

he did not find that he could properly cogitate or meditate, even if he had been, which he never was, a thinker. All his thoughts were reduced to a continued wild succession of burning images—the mild face of his mother, so far away, as it smiled upon him when he ran about among the cane groves of the west; the negroes, with their “young massa” on their tongues, jabbering their affection; his father scowling upon him as undutiful; another, not so far away, in whose eyes—beautiful to him—love dwelt as his worshipper—looking all endearment, only the next moment to cast upon him the withering glance of her contempt, if not hatred; admirers, toadies, satellites, and syco-



phants, all there in groups, and in succession, beslabbering him with praises, then exploding in peals of laughter. Nor was another awaiting in these saturnalia—the form and face of her whose one word of sentence had been to him as a doom, and who fixed that doom in his soul by her red glance of reproof. Seemingly very indifferent objects assumed, in the new lights of his spirit, gigantic and affraying features—the sea-gull, with its torn back, bleeding and quivering, and those diamond eyes so bright, even in its looks of agony—an object low, indeed, in the scale of nature, but here elevated, by some overruling power, into the very heart of man's actions and destinies, as if to show out of what humble things the lightnings of retribution may come. Nay, these diamond eyes haunted him; they were everywhere in these saturnalian reveries, following every recurring image as an inevitable concomitant, which he had no power to drive away—entering into the orbits of the personages, gleaming out of the heads of negroes, that of his father, that of his mother, even that of his mistress, imparting to the looks and glances of the latter, a brilliancy which enhanced beauty, while it sharpened them into poignancy. But, most of all, were they in some way associated with the form of the unknown lady. She never appeared to him as the being on whom his destiny was suspended, but, sooner or later, her own comparatively lustreless orbs changed into those diamonds, which could pierce scorn, not less than they could beam out supplication.

For several days and nights he had scarcely any intervals of peace from these soul-penetrating fancies, and these moments were due to several visitors. Who were they? Not the solicitor, the

brother of his affianced, whom he had expected to see first of all—as a friend, if not as a relation, ready to extend the hand that would save him—not any of those with whom he had shared the folly of extravagance, if not dissipation, on whom he had lavished favours in the wildness of his generosity. The first was felicitating himself on his sister's escape—the latter received the lesson that teaches prudence, *à la distance*. His only visitors were one or two heads of families, where he had been received as a fashionable friend, and these came only to look and inquire. Their curiosity was satisfied when they got out of him the amount of his debt, and pleased when they considered that their daughters were at home, and under no chance of becoming allied to a prisoner. One or two old associates, too, paid their respects to him, but they were of those who had resisted his fascinations, and found their pleasures in their studies. We seek for the virtues, but we do not always find them in the high places, where masks, copied from them, and bearing their beautiful lineaments and their effulgence, are worn in their stead only to cover the vices which are their very antipodes. No; more often in lowlier regions, lying hid behind vices, not voluntary, but often, as it were, inflicted, and peering out, ashamed to be seen, because arrayed in the rags of poverty.

Further on in the same evening, the jailer, a good-natured sort of fellow, came in to him while he was absorbed in these thoughts. He was at the time sitting on his bed.

"A lady called in the dusk," he said, "and inquired if it was true you were here. I told her it was."

"And what more?" asked the youth, as he

started out of his day-dream. "But, stay—what like was she?"

"I could scarcely see her," replied the man; "middling tall, rather young, as I thought—with a veil, through which I could see a pair of pretty, bright eyes."

"Were they like diamonds?" cried the student, absolutely forgetting that he was speaking to an ordinary mortal about very ordinary things.

"Well, I never saw diamond eyes," answered the jailer; "but I've seen glass ones in a doll's head looking very bright. Why, you 'aven't got mad, like some of the chicken-hearted birds in our cage?"

"Yes," cried the youth, "I'm frantic-mad; but, stay, have patience. Did she want to see me?"

"Yes, she asked if she could, but when I told her she might, she seemed to get afraid to come into a jail, and said she would call again to-morrow night, at the same hour."

"Can you tell me nothing more of what she was like?—not she who was here this evening?"

"Why, no; don't you think I know her kind? Oh, we see many o' them. They stick closest to the unfortunate—but 'tis because they are unfortunate themselves. Common thing, sir. Never feel for others till we have something to feel for ourselves. The visitor is a lady, sir."

"Can you tell me nothing more?" said the student, eagerly. "How was she dressed?"

"A large, elegant cloak, sir—can scarcely say more."

"Was it trimmed with fur?"

"Not sure—but now, when I think, there was some lightish trimming—I mean, lighter than the cloak."

"And the bonnet?"

"Why, I think velvet; but you'll maybe see her yourself to-morrow. The like o' her may do you good."

"It is Maria!" ejaculated Dunnet, as the jailer shut the door. "She feels for me, and has come in spite of her hard-hearted brother. Her diamond eyes are of another kind. They speak wealth, and love to bestow it. Her fortune is her own, and, with that, I may yet turn that wayward destiny, and laugh at my persecutors."

That ray of hope, illuminating his soul, changed almost in an instant the whole tenor of his mind. It might be compared to a stream of nervous energy, emanating from the brain, and shooting down through the network of chords, confirming convulsed muscles, and imparting to trembling members consistency of action and graces of motion. His reveries were scared by it, as owls under the influence of a sunbeam, and retreated into the dark recesses from which they had been charmed by the enchantment of despair. The personages of these visions were no longer avengers, casting upon him the burning beams of the diamond eyes. They were hopeful, pitiful; the flatterers and fawners were at their old work again, and pleasure, with her siren face, smiled blandishments on him. Then he would justify the favours of the heaven he made for himself. He would be a logician, for once, in that kind of dialectics called the "wish-born."

"What was I afraid of?" he said to himself. "There is no turpitude, no shame in a fair bet. I was worsted in an honourable contest. What crazy power mocked me into the belief that all this that has befallen me was connected with the

flaying of a bird? Don't we break the necks of innocent, yea, gentle fowls, not depredators like gulls, every day for our dinners? And don't ladies, as delicate as the unknown censor who dared to chastise me with her eyes, eat of the same, with a relish delightful to the tongues that pronounce the fine words of pity and philanthropy? But, even admitting there was cruelty in the act, where is the link that binds it with the consequences which have brought me here? The bet upon the maternity was not an effect of the flaying of the bird. If it followed the prior bet, it would have followed another, in which I was gainer, equally the same. The mad energy which weaves in my head these day-dreams, and pursues me with these diamond eyes of wrath, is a lying power, and I shall master it by the strength of my reason, which, at least, is God's gift. Come, my Maria, as my good angel, and enable me to free my mind from illusions. I will sit and look into your eyes as I have done so often. Yes, I will satisfy myself that they shine still with the lustre of love, hope, and happiness; and, oh, let these, and these only, enter into my dreams."

And thus he satisfied himself, as all do, whose hope weaves the syllogisms of their wishes, and sits to see pleasure caught on the wing. The day passed apace to usher in the evening with its messenger of peace. Where, in that squalid place, would he seat her, whose peculiar province was the drawing-room? How would he receive her first look of sympathy? how repay it? with what words express his emotions? with what fervour kiss those lips, redolent of forgiveness? with what ecstasy look into those eyes refulgent with love. He would control himself, and be calm. He would rehearse



that he might not fail in the forms of an interview on which hung his destiny—almost his life. The hour of seven arrived. He heard the heavy foot of the jailer come tramp, tramp, along the lobby. There was a softer step behind, as if the echo of the heavier tread. A stern voice and a softer one mingled their notes. The door opened.

"My Mar——! O God! these scornful eyes again."

"Not scornful now," replied the soft voice of a woman, as she came forward, and stood before him in the dusk.

"Were there light enough," she continued, "I would lift my veil and show you that they are capable of a kindlier light than even that they now carry, for the offering I made to Heaven has been more than answered."

"Ah, you come to retract," he said; "to speak the truth at last. It is not too late to say you *are* the mother—the mother of the boy—nor need you be ashamed; there may be reasons—but many a woman lives to repent"——

"Hold, sir," she cried, with indignation, as she fixed upon him a look even more penetrating than that he so well remembered. "I have nothing to retract—nothing to be ashamed of. I came here out of pure sympathy, to make amends to one who has fallen, for a prayer which burst from me in my anger. Your friend, who called for me, told me that you were a prisoner, and that your imprisonment was the consequence of the wager, which it fell to me to decide. I did not come to repeat to you what I said before, that I am not the mother of the boy, but to make an explanation."

"And I have one to ask," said he.

"I am ready to answer."

"How could I be deceived?" said he. "I heard the boy address you as his mother."

"And that is what I came to explain. I have taxed my memory since Mr Campbell insisted, in my presence, that Frederick did address me in the manner you have stated. Shall I tell you the precise words he used?"

"I wait for them."

"Well, they were, 'sea-maw.'"

"The very words—and were they not enough for proof and belief?"

"Yes, sir; but there are words which have two significations. Ma' is the contraction, as you know, for mamma, but it is pronounced the same as *maw*, which is a word we use to designate those birds, otherwise called gulls. I recollect that while I was unable to bear the sight of the tortured bird, and had turned my head in another direction, my nephew kept looking over the rails, and that, as he saw the struggling creature, he cried out to me the words you misconstrued. And thus the mystery is cleared up."

"Miserable and fatal error," he gasped out, as he staggered back. "And the connexion!—the connexion! There *was* retribution in those diamond eyes."

"What mean you, sir?"

"The bird's eyes, that haunt me in my reveries, and enter into the sockets of my dream-beings!"

"Are you mad?"

"No; or the heavens are mad, with their swirling orbs and blazing comets, that rush sighing through space before some terrible power that will give them no respite, except with the condition, that when they rest they die."

"Poor youth! so early doomed—I pity you."

"Ay, pity those who have no pity—those are the truly wretched; for pity, in the world's life, is the soul of reason's action. Ah, madam, it is those who have pity who do not need the pity of others, for they are generally free from the faults that produce the unhappiness that needs pity."

"But you have been punished, I admit, in a very strange and mysterious way; for the word used by the boy was the joining link of the two transactions, and you were led to misconstrue it—ay, and to take advantage of your misconstruction to get the better of your friend."

"I see it all."

"But I say you have been punished," continued she, consolingly; "and I perceive you are penitent,—perhaps justice is satisfied; and when you are liberated you may be the better for the lesson. I shall now reverse my prayer, and say to one I shall perhaps never see again, may God deal mercifully by you."

And, with these words, she retreated. But her prayer was never answered, so far as man can judge of Heaven's mysterious ways. The conviction settled down and down into his heart, that that apparently simple affair of killing a bird, which, even with the aggravation of all the cruelty exhibited by the thoughtless, yet certainly pitiless youth, is so apt to be viewed carelessly, or only with an avowal of disapprobation—which, if too much insisted on as an act to be taken up by superior retribution, is more apt still to be laughed at, was the cause of all the ills that had befallen him. The diamond eyes proved to him no fancy. But, for all this, we are afforded, by what subsequently occurred, some means of explanation, which will be greedily laid hold of by minute philosophers.

Even then it was to have been feared that the seeds of consumption had been deposited in favourable soil. In our difficulties about explanations of mental phenomena, we readily flee to diseases of the body, which, after all, only removes the mystery a step or two back in the dark.

ALEX. LEIGHTON.

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## Charles Seymour's Jealousy.

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"Trifles, light as air,  
Are to the jealous confirmation strong,  
As proofs of holy writ."

—SHAKESPEARE.

"My dear Charles, how very agreeable you are this morning," said Julia Melville, ironically, to her lover, as he sat reading with great apparent intensity in the drawing-room, "you have absolutely made my head ache with talking so much!"

This playful appeal had no effect upon the young man so addressed, though he sat at a window, the delicious view from which might have banished gloom from the brow of any but a lover. It looked out upon a velvet lawn of the brightest green, beyond which rose a fine diversity of country, dying away in tints until it softened into the horizon. Around him clusters of rose and honeysuckle peeped their fragrant heads in at the casement as if to woo his attention; and a beautiful thrush on the green branches of a magnificent walnut-tree was singing blithe notes of joy, but it was all of no avail. Julia, however, was not thus to be baffled. She sat down to the piano, and running her fingers lightly over the



keys, sung one of his most favourite airs. Still no alteration.

"What can you be reading in which you are so much interested?" said she, peeping over the back of his chair. "Ah, Othello! a pretty study, truly. By-the-bye, Charles, that Miss Grey with whom you danced so frequently last night is a pretty girl. Did not you admire her?"

He raised his eyes for a moment, and looked alternately on her arch countenance and on the sky, as if to ascertain whether the blue of her eyes did not rival the vaulted canopy above, and their lustre the rain-drops that still sparkled on the flowers; but he replied coldly, "Almost as much as you appeared to admire her brother," and again returned to the perusal of his book.

"Very well spoken, my lively automaton," said Julia, quietly drawing a chair near to him and seating herself; "and now that I have made you speak, pray let the spirit move you to answer me. Do you mean to be serious?"

"Perfectly so, ma'am."

"Ma'am! that's a bad beginning. Well, sir—as politeness seems the order of the day—to proceed. Will you have the goodness to inform me if one of your soliloquising fits of jealousy is on the *tapis*, because, if so, I will prepare my will, leaving you as a legacy my good temper, and make my exit."

"The fact is, Julia, you are far too lively. Whoever you may be dancing with, be he sage or fool, I hear and see you laughing, perhaps at my expense, never once heeding me who am all the while in an agony, and replying to my partner's questions in the most *outré* manner. It is really intolerable to see you joking with all the young

puppies of the day, and looking as merry as if you had not a care upon you."

"A most eloquent harangue, Charles, upon my word, and very well worthy both of the orator and audience. Pray, sir, what other charges have you to prefer before I begin my exculpation?"

No reply.

"Well, then, in the first place, I don't like to see people dance with countenances as serious as if they were just returned from an execution; so if I dance with the sage, I laugh for them, if with fools, at them. So ends the solution to problem the first. Secondly, do not be alarmed lest I should laugh at you, for then others might laugh too, and I should not like that. Thirdly, I look merry because I have no care. Why should I, when my dear Charles is so kind and indulgent?"

"Well, but Julia, you might receive my attentions with a little more civility, and dance with me at least three or four times in the course of the evening, instead of which you always contrive to shuffle me off, and dance with some stupid dandy or other that makes my blood boil when I see him hand you out."

"Stop, stop, Charles. What a string of nonsense is your touchy brain making you talk? Dancing-rooms are too full of sharp eyes for me to think of receiving any extra civility from you. Fancy the *wall-flowers* engaged in an interesting conversation, all quite confidential, and pursued in an audible whisper, thus—'Do you know, my dear ma'am, Miss Melville is in love!' 'In love? bless me! I thought she looked rather pale. Who is the happy man?' 'Mr Charles Seymour.' 'Indeed! I am surprised at her choice.' That, you know, would be *very* pleasant for me to hear.

I should colour up very naturally with indignation, and all would be out. The old ladies would whisper the matter confidentially all round the room, and you and I should look pretty fools. No, no, Charles; though I have not yet lived so many years in the world as you have, I must do myself the credit to say that I know better how to behave in it."

"Well, but indeed, dear Julia, if you could feel how I am tortured."

"And if you could feel how *I* am tortured," interrupted Julia, "when I see the man who knows I have preferred him to all others, thus giving way to unkind, ungenerous fears. Methinks his conduct should be somewhat different."

As she spoke, a large tear fell on the delicate little hand on which her cheek rested, and went like a dagger to the heart of her lover. "Forgive me, dearest Julia, I own I am wrong, but promise me you will not dance to-night with young Grey!"

"If I have a reasonable excuse for refusing; but I cannot promise to make myself ridiculous by affronting any young man. Do but confide in me as I have believed in you, and all will be well."

He promised, kissed the tear off her cheek, and they parted, to meet in the evening at a ball.

The day passed rapidly away, and the night of trial came. Arrayed with simplicity and taste, Julia repaired to the ball-room, where was already a brilliant assemblage of beauty and fashion, and where not only Charles was waiting to receive her, but also the much dreaded young Grey.

"Remember the ides of March are come," she whispered, as she was led out to dance. Charles smiled, and nerved up his heart; and as he gazed on her graceful figure, swimming through the

mazes of the dance, he felt quite at ease. But she stopped; he saw her talking cheerfully to her partner, heard her laugh, grew agitated, and replied to a lady who remarked, "How beautifully the musicians perform"—"Ah! I knew how it would be, I cannot bear it."

The lady pursed up her mouth at his odd reply, and left him, as she thought, either mad or a fool, to pursue his cogitations, and to tell some friend, confidentially, what a queer young man he was. Julia smiled at him, and again he determined to take it all as a matter of course, and remember what she had said to him in the morning; but again she danced with young Grey; again he heard her laugh, and again the demon jealousy gained full control over him; and in the height of his resentment, at what he termed her unparalleled cheerfulness, he resolved to fly from her for ever, rather than be thus tortured.

On the following day Charles did not come; but the next, as Julia was pursuing a solitary walk in the garden, and wondering at the cause of his absence, she was accosted by, "I am come, Miss Melville, to take my leave of you!"

"Indeed, Mr Seymour," said Julia, with an involuntary start, and, "pray, may I ask, whither you are bound?"

"I set off for the Continent to-morrow."

"And, pray, as you have been thus far explicit, what may have caused so sudden a resolution?"

"My father has long wished me to travel for two or three years; but I could never make up my mind until now. In short, Julia"—

"In short, Charles, you are flying off at a tangent, and are come to the noble and manly resolution of going to cure jealousy in the sultry climes

of Italy ; or perhaps to cool your over fertile imagination in the Tiber, or the Tagus, or some classic stream, on whose banks you will wander, and murmur your complaints to sweet echo ; and who, when you exclaim with that same pitiful countenance, ungrateful, will reply by way of consolation, ' great fool ! '

" Julia, you are too bad. I have borne with your jokes, but I cannot bear with insult, and"—

" And you, Charles, you are too touchy. I have borne with your nonsensical jealousy, because I thought in the main you were a good-hearted youth ; and really, now I think of it, a continental trip might be of some service to you at any rate. You would come back more learned, and, of all things, I should like a learned husband. You know, Charles, you could teach me so much, and then you'd tell me of

' Most disastrous chances,  
Of moving accident by flood and field,'

and all that, and I should love you,

' For the dangers you had pass'd,  
And you'd love me, that I did pity you.'

Really, now, your eyes roll so, I think you look something like Othello ! "

" Thank you, Miss Melville, for the comparison, but I am serious. Your conduct on the night of the ball convinced me that you could not, even for my sake, forbear giving way to your high spirit, and indulging in your jokes with Mr Grey ; and once again"—

" And once again, Charles, I will endeavour to procure for you a berth in St Luke's, since I find you incurable ; and, seriously, I think you had better take off your hat, you look rather warm."



"Miss Melville," said Charles, gravely, "I had flattered myself into a belief that I possessed some interest in your heart; this cool raillery has undeceived me; and, tell me, have I not reason to be jealous?"

"Charles," she replied, while her lively tone of repartee was exchanged for one of reproach, "this is not the first or the fiftieth time that you have put that question, and I as frequently answered it; but I cannot submit to be thus daily catechised. If you are resolved to doubt me, the sooner we part the better, but we part friends; and if we are friends"—said she, averting her face, and stretching out her hand. Charles seized it; he was on the point of imploring her forgiveness, as he had done fifty times before, but his evil genius presented to him the ball, and all the torture he had endured, and imprinting on it a cold kiss, though his lips trembled, he hastened from the garden without adding a word.

Julia's heart beat high as she heard his rapid step die away. She listened. He called loudly for his horse, and she stirred not till the clatter of hoofs, at full gallop, had sunk into silence.

"He is gone!" she murmured, and she threw herself into a garden seat, not to weep, but to make up her mind to forget him. "I will forget him," she said; "and yet he cannot be gone; but 'tis no matter, he surely cannot leave me thus! but pshaw! I'll think of him no more," and she rose to attend to her flowers. A horse was heard along the road. "It must be he, he is returned; but if it be, I shall scorn to speak to him," but her colour rose, and she stood to listen. The horse passed, it was not him, and again she disdained to think of him; but the next minute, and the next

hour, she was still wondering if he was really gone, and the next week all suspense was over, and she heard that a letter had actually been received from him, dated Paris. Still, however, though she resolved not to think of him, she thought he might repent, and write to her, since he was obliged to perform his promise to his father and go. But weeks and months rolled on, and no letter came, and hope deferred began to sicken her heart, and his lock of hair, which she was sure she did not now value, was carefully locked up, to be looked at only once a day.

Months passed on, and Julia heard nothing of him, except that in his letters he usually sent his compliments to the Melvilles.

About twelve months after Charles's departure, Julia Melville was summoned to the melancholy office of attending the last moments of a beloved friend. She was a young widow with one little girl, about a year and a half old, and as the dying woman pressed her friend feebly to her heart, she whispered, "My Julia, promise to be a mother to my little cherub; and you, my child, this will in future be your mamma." Julia promised, and as she kissed the tears from the cheek of the now smiling mother, she felt thankful that even in this hour of trial she had it in her power to impart consolation.

The shades of death ere long passed over the placid countenance of her friend, and with the most affectionate interest she took charge of her *protégé*. Her thoughts were now directed into a new channel; but still, with the usual perverseness of human nature, the more she determined to forget her own source of uneasiness, the more the subject seemed to press upon her mind, and the

less she heard of Charles, the more she thought and wondered, and wondered and thought, and though she repeated to herself a hundred times a day, "How foolish I am to think about him;" her reveries always ended with a sigh, and "perhaps after all, poor fellow, he is sorry."

In the meantime, Charles was pursuing his studies on the Continent, but he was not at ease; there was a gnawing at his heart, in the shape of conscience, which whispered that he had been too hasty in his conduct towards Miss Melville, and he once seriously thought of returning, but pride in alarm took up arms, and drove poor conscience from the field, so he e'en pursued his journey, visiting most of the principal towns in France, Italy, and Germany, and was in a fair way of returning, as Julia had told him, with more learning than he carried out. At Dresden he was joined by Mr Arlincourt, a friend who had been his companion during his stay in Paris, and as they were both in pursuit of the same thing, information, and were of congenial tastes, they were both pleased in the opportunity of being comrades during a very interesting tour.

As they were one day wandering through the fine gallery of the Duc de C——, where were assembled some *chefs-d'œuvre*, both in painting and sculpture, they both, as with one consent, stopped at a picture in which a lovely female formed the principal figure. It was a St Cecilia, pale, but strikingly beautiful. The young men gazed for some time in profound silence, each wrapped in his own meditations. At length young Arlincourt exclaimed, "By heaven! 'tis as like as if she had sat for it!" Charles started, and asked with great eagerness, "To whom do you

allude?"—"To a Miss Melville," replied Arlin-court, gravely; "and the most lovely creature I ever beheld. After I left you at Paris, I went to England, and met her at Lady Edward's; if I had had leisure, I should have fallen desperately in love with her; but, as it was, she received my attention with great coolness—by the bye, Charles, you must know her; for on my mentioning your name, she asked several questions respecting you, which, of course, I replied to with as much *nonchalance* as I could muster; though I felt deucedly mortified at her apparent interest in such a handsome young fellow as you are, Charles, when I was trying to play the agreeable to her!"

"Yes," replied Charles, in a sort of audible soliloquy, "it is wonderfully like her, but too pale, she"——

"Too pale," interrupted Arlin-court; "not pale enough, for, by Jove, she was as pale as yonder marble statue; she was thin, too, and looked as if she was in sorrow."

"Did she?" said Charles; "and did you make no inquiry about this syren?"

"Yes, I asked young Grey if he knew whether she was ill; and he said he supposed she was pining after some faithless swain; this, and a look of mighty significance, was all the information I could obtain."

Charles turned away, and busied himself in examining a small picture, but presently returning, and endeavouring to look very indifferent, he continued, "Oh, pray, Arlin-court, what questions did Miss Melville ask about me, and what did you answer?"

"Why, my dear fellow, in the first place sho

asked how you were? and I replied, 'perfectly well.'"

"You should not have said so," interrupted Charles, hastily, "I was not well."

"She asked me, secondly, were you cheerful? Now, my dear Seymour, what could a young fellow do, when he found himself in the background, but tell a white lie, and so I replied, you were the merriest fellow I ever met, quite the life of Paris. I heard, or thought I heard, a sigh, and so the conversation ended. I began to imagine I had carried her by a *coup-d'esprit*, but unfortunately she became taciturn, and, complaining of a violent headache, I lost my pains and my partner at the same time—but, my dear Charles, what is the matter? you look as pale as she did; I did not think this would interest you."

"Oh, Arlincourt, you have ruined me, I must set off instantly!"

Arlincourt was in a moment enlightened.

"Do, do, my dear friend; depend upon it you will be in time, or she would not have been so pallid; be off, and Cupid and fortune attend you!"

So saying, he dragged Charles home, who prepared to set off on the following morning, leaving pictures, and statues, and all the course of study he had proposed to pursue, to some wight who had the good luck neither to be in love, nor to have run a wild-goose chase into foreign parts in search of a remedy for jealousy.

Leaving Charles to pursue his journey to England as rapidly as lame horses and contrary winds would permit him, while he railed at both, we return to Julia.

After her conversation with young Arlincourt, respecting Charles, she was more than ever resolved



to forget him ; but (most provokingly) something was always occurring to bring him to her mind. Either his name was mentioned, or she had plucked a rose from his favourite bush, as it happened to be the finest in the garden ; or, in arranging her wardrobe, she met, quite unexpectedly, with his portrait, and as she glanced her moist eye upon it she thought it impossible that such a noble face and form could contain an ungenerous mind ; and though Arlincourt had said that he was gay and merry she need not believe it, and she thought of Posthumus and Imogen, and made up her mind that he would come back at last ; though, if he did, she meant to be as cold and distant as ever woman was.

In this mood she strolled out one fine summer's morning in the garden, with her little charge, who was her constant companion. The child was lovely, and her light curling hair shaded her laughing eyes, which seemed to rival the deep blue of the iris. Julia seated herself in a little arbour, which was overgrown by a luxuriant woodbine, turning its strong fibres around a delicate jessamine, and seeming to kiss the pure white flowers that peeped from their green recesses, offering a luscious tribute to the industrious bee. There was scarcely a breeze stirring ; the sun seemed to have silenced all nature, even the gay butterfly that had been flitting away its little span of life amidst the roses, rested as if fatigued with its exertions. Julia felt unusually sad, and her young playmate was wandering about to pluck the prettiest flowers for her "dear mamma," as she now constantly called her protectress. The distant sound of a horse at full gallop was borne on the lazy air. It approached nearer and nearer, and Julia's heart beat, she knew not why. It stopped at the garden gate, which

was violently opened, and at the same time her little playfellow ran towards her, exclaiming loudly, "Dear, dear mamma, here is a gentleman." She started from the arbour, and turning the angle of a walk, encountered Charles. He had caught the child's words, and gazing for an instant on Julia, as he would have pierced into her soul, uttered, (his whole frame trembling with agitation,) "Mamma, oh, Arlincourt!" and, turning away, rushed from her presence, threw himself on his horse, which he had just quitted with all the animation of hope, and, heedless of her voice as she exclaimed, "Charles! I entreat you to stop and hear me," rode off at full gallop, and in half an hour arrived, to the utter astonishment of his whole family, breathless, and looking as if he had just escaped from Charon's ferry-boat. "Dear Charles!" and "Poor Charles!" and "How ill you look!" and "What can have brought you home?" were dinned into his ears by his mother and sisters, until he fairly wished himself on the banks of the Styx. The first greeting over, he pleaded fatigue as the cause of his pallid appearance, and off trotted his mamma to the housekeeper to see for something for her dear boy, and off ran his sisters for something to show him. One, however, remained, and he took the opportunity to say, with a contortion of countenance intended for a smile, and a preluding exclamation between a sigh and a groan,

"Humph! so Miss Melville is married!"

"Married, Charles? indeed she is not."

"But she is, though," said Charles, "and has a child, and an ugly little thing it is too."

"Ugly? it is a perfect beauty; it is not hers, it is the child of her deceased friend, Mrs Herbert, and, if I am any judge, I should say Julia's heart

is still with one who does not at all deserve it, from his unkind treatment !”

Charles understood her look, started from his seat, rang the bell impetuously, and without waiting to have it answered, rushed down-stairs, nearly upsetting in his progress, his mother, sisters, and the footman, who were hurrying from all parts of the house to see what was the matter ; called for his horse, ran to the stable, saddled it himself, threw himself on his back, to the utter astonishment of the whole establishment, from the mistress down to the groom, galloped off, and in a short time was at the feet of Julia, whom he still found in the arbour. The “ugly little thing,” who had caused poor Charles such a sudden reversion of feeling, was no longer there. “Dearest Julia,” he exclaimed, “forgive me, I entreat you, do but say you still love me, and, trust me, you shall never again have cause to complain of my jealousy ; oh, if you but knew what I have suffered during this cruel absence, you would surely pity me. Arlincourt, you were right ; she is indeed pale as a marble statue, and the loveliest of beings,” he continued, as he gazed on her, “she must, she will forgive me !”

During this harangue, Julia had in some degree recovered her self-possession, and willing to try him, said, with apparent earnestness—“Arlincourt ! have you seen him lately ? I thought him a delightful young man, so full of vivacity and good humour ; and indeed, Charles, if you have had him for a companion you have been fortunate.”

Charles started up in actual horror, and exclaimed, “Good heavens ! am I again the dupe of my own intolerable impetuosity ! Is it then for Arlincourt that this cheek is thus pallid, this

form thus altered! O Julia, how have I been deceived."

"Do you think it probable, Mr Seymour," replied Julia, with half a smile, and half a sigh, "that I should have pined for one who, I had the pleasure to hear, was 'quite the life' of such a gay place as Paris?"

"You have been most grossly deceived, Julia; that villain Arlincourt has reported falsely of me, for his own base purposes; but he shall answer for his conduct. No, Miss Melville, I wandered through Paris with feelings of—— but 'tis folly to plead thus, where I am despised, betrayed," continued he, turning to depart.

"Stop, Mr Seymour," said Julia, laying her white hand upon his arm. He stopped, and fixed his eyes upon her countenance, the pallidness of which was giving way to the delicate hue of the pale pink acacia. "I see, poor Charles," she continued, "that you have not left your evil genius amongst the nymphs of Arcadia, nor bequeathed it to the Dryads of the Tiber, but already, at our very first meeting, are indulging in a fit of jealousy, your 'eye in a fine frenzy rolling,' merely because I was so polite as to inquire after your friend. Now, if this be done for effect, allow me to assure you it has but a poor one; if reality, you are the most absurd lover ever created; so now, sir, give your evidence, and I will pronounce my verdict accordingly."

There was so much of Julia's accustomed tone and manner in this, that Charles began to think that he was still the chosen swain of her affections. In a short time he felt fully convinced of the matter. They were soon after married, and lived very happily.

To say that Charles was never jealous again, would be averring too much for human weakness; but whenever he found the demon stealing his hand over him, he thought on all the torture he had before caused himself, and on investigation of the circumstances, invariably ascertained the fault but lay in his own imagination.



# Annie Marshall's Destiny.

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## CHAPTER I.

### WAITING FOR THE SHIP.

"The stars are with the voyager,  
Wherever he may sail;  
The moon is constant to her time;  
The sun will never fail.  
But follow, follow round the world,  
The green earth and the sea,  
So love is with the lover's heart  
Wherever he may be."—HOOD.

"When Britain first, at Heaven's command,  
Arose from out the azure main,  
This was the charter of the land,  
And guardian angels sung the strain,  
Rule Britannia, Britannia rule the waves,  
Britons never shall be slaves."

So sung, or rather growled, old Matthew Pengelly, as he paced along the cliffs, telescope in hand, looking out upon the lowering sky and stormy sea. "*Old Matthew*," he was familiarly called by the good folks of Looe and its environs; but old he was not, spite of his gray hairs and weather-beaten face. He was barely forty, though a casual observer would have set him down for fifty at least;

but Matthew had weathered many a storm and seen many a sorrow, and had grown in looks, if not in heart, old before his time. He was known far and wide as the bravest and trustiest of the little band of coast-guard men stationed in that sequestered nook; and many a shipwrecked mariner and storm-beaten sailor, driven to what seemed certain death, could tell with gratitude how the intrepid fellows on shore, under the guidance of his clear head and skilful hand, had been, under Heaven, the means of saving their lives. Matthew had never married, to the surprise of every one who knew him; he lived with a sister older than himself, and an orphan girl whom they had brought up. Twelve years before, when he had been in the service but a little time, a terrible storm drove a small coasting vessel ashore on the reefs below Dowderry, between Plymouth and Looe, and Matthew, at the risk of his life, had saved a little child, the only rescued creature, from the pitiless sea. She was but six years old, and her father and mother both were drowned. Matthew took her home; and when he rose, a gray-haired man, from a terrible illness brought on by the peril of that awful night, little Annie Marshall was running about their humble home, a veritable gleam of sunshine in the dulness of their life. She had no friends that they could find out, and they had kept her, to find in her gentle care and grateful service, bountiful recompense for all that their benevolence had done for her. She was a pretty, fair girl, with a certain air of refinement about her which accorded well with her delicate features and slight form; and she was secretly envied by all the girls, and openly admired by all the lads, in the little town. But Annie had no heart to give

any one, it was gone out of her keeping; though only herself and the happy possessor of it knew her secret. David Batley was the son of a fisherman, who lived in the next cottage to the Pengellys; and being but a few years older than the orphan girl, they had played together as children, and fallen in love with each other as lad and lass. He was at sea now; with his growing love had grown ambition too; and he wanted to make more money than he could gather at his trade. His parents had sorrowed over his leaving them at first, but the simple-hearted dwellers by the sea, who draw their daily bread from the deep waters, are used to partings like this; the ocean to them is a high road to life and independence, and they consign their best and dearest to its keeping with honest prayers and subdued sorrow. But David was coming home now from a long voyage,—might be expected any time; he had arrived safely in Liverpool, and from thence he had written to say that he was going to give an old acquaintance a hand in his schooner, and that they should be at Looe in a few days, wind and weather permitting. Annie's heart beat high with hope and expectation; David would tell Matthew and his sister of their love, and she should be his wife. Her head was full of bright visions for the future on this stormy evening, as she tripped along the cliff road to where Matthew paced up and down, singing to the sea and sky. Now Matthew had a secret too, which Annie in her simplicity had no suspicion of,—he loved her, this rugged coast-guardsmen, with his rough speech and weather-beaten face,—loved her with all his great honest heart; but, with all his bravery, he lacked the courage to tell her of it. She was in his thoughts now, as he mused and

sang, and looked seaward to where the bright gleam from the Eddystone shone fitfully over the troubled sea. "It's coming up stiffish," he murmured, "right from the sou-west; I'm glad it's not Dick Hanway's watch to-night; he's getting past his work, he is. Why, Annie, lass, is that you?"

"Yes, it's me," said the girl, who had come up close behind him. "I've brought your things; see."

She held up a little basket and a woollen comforter as she spoke. "Auntie Joan was afraid I should be blown away; but I would come. I like the wild wind and the dashing sea, though it did take my father and mother from me," she added, with a sadder look coming over her bright young face.

"But it gave you to me, Annie, instead," said the coast-guardsmen, drawing her out of the wind into a sheltered nook in the rock of the cliff. "Sit here a minute, dear, I want to talk to you; you are not sorry I took you from the waves, are you?"

"Sorry!" she exclaimed. "Why, Uncle Matthew, what are you thinking of? Has not my life been one long sunshine? Does not every wave that comes lapping on to the beach yonder speak to me of you, and all that you have done for me? You and Auntie have spoiled me; you know you have."

"Don't, Annie, don't," he whispered, as she threw her arms round his neck, and pressed her soft cheek to his. "Sit down by me, darling, and let me tell you all that's in my heart, if it's not too full to let me speak. Do I look so very old to you, Annie?"

"Why, what a funny question, uncle."

"Don't call me that, dear; we only call old people uncle in Cornwall, you know; and I do not want you to think me old. I want you to think of me as some one you could love may be, some one who would lay down his life, if dying would make you happy. I'm not crazy, my lass, don't look scared at me; but the love that's been in my heart for all the years I've had you in my house has found a voice at last. Annie, I love you! Will you be my wife?"

"Your wife!"

She could hardly utter the words, so stunned was she by the unexpected avowal, and her heart turned cold and sick.

"Yes; my wife," he replied. "Hold hard a bit, my darling, as I've watched grow up and waited for till my heart seemed fit to burst;—hold hard if you're going to say me nay,—let me have the happy hope that fills my breast for a little longer yet; it has been to me like yonder beacon light, the one glimpse of brightness to keep me in the right way."

Annie did not speak, but she trembled from head to foot with agitation. What should she say? What should she do? To Matthew Pengelly she owed her life and all that made life happy; he was good and true, and in his tranquil home there would be peace and protection,—but David! He who was even now on the sea, speeding home to her with joy and hope in his heart,—what would it be to him? She was on the horns of a dilemma, poor girl, and knew not how to act. Matthew felt her shaking, and drew her close to him.

"I've frightened you, little one," he said, in a



strangely tender voice. "I'm rough in my ways and blunt in my speech, and may be I've been too sudden for you,—but I love you tender and true,—I do, indeed, dear, and I've watched and waited for many a long year for the minute when I could clasp you to my breast and call you wife,—and I may now, mayn't I, darling?"

"Stop a bit," she said, breathlessly, "let me think a little,—it's so sudden, I"—

"Ay, that's it,—I've been sudden,—think over it, dear; I think you'll say yes. I've watched you many a time, with your loving ways, and listened to your pretty voice, and I've said to myself—'Of course, she'll love me when I ask her; she can't know any one else that'll be to her what I will. And you don't, do you, darling?' Oh, speak to me, Annie! Speak, if it's only to dash out the life and hope that fill my breast; or if you can't say anything, if you're frightened and shy like, just slip your hand into mine, and let your dumb fingers speak for you."

"I'm not fit," faltered the poor girl; "I never thought of this,—I shouldn't make you a good wife, Matthew."

"Time'll show that, dear; is it a bargain?"

She made no answer, except to put her hand shyly into his brown palm; it was well it was too dark for him to see her white face. He gave a gasp, which was almost a sob of joy, but when he would have folded her in his arms she shrank back with a slight shiver.

"Let me go," she pleaded. "Let me go home to Auntie Joan."

"Not auntie any more, dear," he said, tenderly adjusting her cloak. "She'll be your sister from this time. Go home, my birdie, you're all trem-

bling,—go home, and pray that yonder coming storm may do no harm to any poor soul at sea.”

It was a strange betrothal,—the flashing lightning played upon Annie's face as she turned away, and the rumble of the thunder drowned the tender words that her lover sent after. Her lover ! The dashing sea seemed to roar it into her ears, and the whistling wind to shriek it around her head as she hurried along. Matthew Pengelly her lover ! soon to be her husband, and David coming back over the sea hoping to call her his own. It was a strange dilemma for a young girl to be in ; one of those sudden turns of fortune's wheel which dashes the cup of happiness from the lips, and places the bitter draught of duty there instead,—and she would do her duty,—she would give Matthew all her obedience, her devotion,—but her love, oh, never ! no, *that* she must bury for ever deep in her own heart !

Matthew looked long and earnestly after her as she went slowly away, his heart beating high with joy. What mattered to him the stormy sea, the cloudy sky, and the prospect of a night of discomfort out of doors ? Annie had promised to be his without a murmur, without a word.

“Ay,” he said to himself, “without a word, she never made any fuss ;—I wish she'd kissed me though—she was so quiet and shy. Eh, my darling, I'll soon break her off that ? What have I done that I should be so happy ? Thank God for it !” and he reverently lifted his cap in a moment of grateful joy, and sent up a heartfelt thanksgiving for his new happiness. The sky grew darker and darker, and the sea lashed itself into white foam on the rocks below him, but he heeded it not in his happy dream, till the sound

of a gun came booming over the water. Then the stern voice of duty came back again, and the lover was forgotten.

"A ship," he muttered, "and coming right in, by the sound,—Lord help 'em!"

While he spoke another gun flashed and roared, and a moment afterwards a blue light gleamed out from the vessel, and he saw her drifting right in. She came upon the pitiless rocks with her helpless crew,—at his very feet it seemed, she was so near. To fire the little beacon, always kept ready to alarm the town, was the work of a moment, and ere he had time to take any further measures, hurrying feet came towards him through the darkness, and a Babel of voices rose upon the wind. Half the population of the place were astir, ready to help,—the men to risk their lives if need be, the women to succour and restore any who might be saved. It was no uncommon scene on those rocks with the wind in that quarter. Boats were not to be thought of, but the station was rich in the possession of all the appliances for saving life from shipwreck, and the lines and ropes were soon in readiness.

"What's the ship?" said an old man, the father of David Batley, pressing forward. "For God's sake, tell me!"

"I doubt she's the *Good Intent*," said another, in a low tone. "It's a pity the old man's here, poor soul."

"The *Good Intent*!" said Annie, who had come out with Joan Pengelly, and stood clinging to her arm. "Don't say that. And yet, better so, better so, he's on board, and he'll die."

The man stared at her in wonder at her wild face and strange words, and Matthew came to her side.

"Annie, dear," he said, gently, "you should not have come here. Such sights are not for the likes of you. Please God, we'll save them; I'm going to fire the rocket, and I never missed my aim yet, and we'll bring off your old playmate to dance at our wedding; so cheer up, lass, and help us with your prayers."

Annie clung to Joan's side in an agony of fear, as amid breathless silence the rocket went whizzing through the air, and an answering shout told that it had been well aimed. Then they gave back shout for shout as they paid out the line, and ere long felt it tighten in their grasp. Then the cradle was hooked on and lowered, and they lent themselves with a will to pull it up. Slowly and heavily it came with its living burden—a man, a woman, and a little boy.

A few breathless questions asked and answered, and the basket was lowered again, this time in breathless silence, for they heard that their young townsman was badly hurt and unable to move, and that two out of the little crew were gone for ever. Some one must go down, but who? The ship was beginning to break up, and it was a chance if he who went ever came back again. Old Jonathan Batley threw himself at Matthew Pengelly's feet, sobbing the tearless sobs of old age.

"My boy! my boy!" he murmured. "Fetch my boy for his mother's sake."

"I will, Heaven helping me," he said, solemnly. "Bear a hand, mates, and lower quietly, I'm a good weight."

He turned for a moment to Annie; her self-control had entirely deserted her, and she was struggling frantically with Joan as though she would have thrown herself into the sea.

"Let me go," she was saying. "If he can't be saved, let me die too!"

Matthew heard her words and the brave light died out of his eyes, and for a moment his head drooped. Only for a moment, however, and he stood erect again with a white face, and took both her hands.

"Annie, if I don't die with him," he said, "I'll bring him back to you."

His words recalled her to herself, and she shrieked after him to stay, but he was already half-way down, and she could only dimly see the moving ropes which lowered him into what seemed a huge grave. Her over-strained nerves could hear no more, and she fainted in Joan's arms.

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## CHAPTER II.

### MARRIED.

"Married! married! and not to me!  
Is it a dream? or can it be?"

It was with straining eyes and aching hearts that those above watched the descent of the basket with their brave comrade in it, for every moment increased the danger to life and limb. The cable was slackening, the timbers of the devoted vessel parting and cracking, and many a heartfelt prayer went up for his safety and the preservation of those he went to save. Joan hid her face on Annie's insensible form, and tried to shut out all sight and hearing till time enough had passed to make suspense into certainty either for good or ill.



"Don't touch her; let her alone," she said to those who would have tried to revive the unconscious girl. "She'll rouse soon enough; it'll only be to hear he's gone from us for ever."

"Don't say that, Aunt Joan," said a lad at her side who held up a lantern. "Uncle Matthew'll come back to us, never fear. Hurrah! they're pulling again! Easy now, lads! altogether!"

And, joining his fresh young voice to swell the shouts that rang on every side, he laid to with a will and helped to pull up the basket once more. Very slowly now; it was the last time they would pull any one up out of that doomed wreck, and they sadly hoped that they might be all there. A dozen willing hands seized the edge of the cradle, as a last vigorous pull brought it up to their feet, and fifty voices cried out, "Well done, Matthew!" But a stranger stepped out. There was no Matthew there. Two sailors, and the insensible body of David Batley, sorely cut and bruised, but not their brave companion. "Where is he? where is he?" they cried unanimously, as the two men stood unhurt among them; and Jonathan Batley's son was laid tenderly on a tarpaulin till they could carry him away.

"On board," replied one of the sailors. "He wouldn't come; said he could swim. He bid us care well for the lad there; said his folk were waiting for him up here."

"Swim in such a sea!" said the men. "Impossible! Down with the basket, mates; it may be in time yet."

"No," said the sailor who had last come up; "'twould be only surer death. The *Good Intent's* broken her back on those cursed rocks, and your tackle wont hold. See!"

Even as he spoke there was a crash below them, and the hawser hung limp and loose over the rock.

"Oh, Matthew, Matthew!" moaned poor Joan, "why did you go to your death and leave me all alone?"

"Don't say that, ma'am," said one of the rescued men; "please God we'll save him yet. He can swim, you say?"

"Like a fish," said two or three voices. "And the current's setting right in, and there's soft beach at Pledy. There's hope yet, Joan!"

"You stay here," said a coastguardsman to the dripping sailor, who was for scrambling off with the rest to the place indicated; "you've had enough for one night, I reckon."

"I'm none the worse, now I've had a pull at your brandy," he answered; "and it sha'n't be said that Bill Dawson of the *Good Intent* left any one to die after he owed his life to them. Keep up heart, old lady, and you, my pretty flower; we'll have him out yet, please God."

It was not Heaven's will that the noble life should be sacrificed that night; and when they reached the little bit of soft sand, Matthew Pengelly lay prone and exhausted upon it. His thorough knowledge of where he was, and the current setting that way, had saved him from being dashed upon the rocks; and a wild shout of exultation rang up to tell those above of his safety. Down through a speaking trumpet came the question—

"Alive?"

"Ay."

"Well?"

"Ay."

And there came another hurrah till the very

rocks re-echoed, and Annie, who had recovered enough to comprehend what was going on, burst into passionate tears.

"Thank the Lord!" exclaimed old Jonathan Batley, solemnly, uncovering his white head, while tears streamed down his aged cheeks.

"Ay, thank the Lord, indeed," said the young girl, wildly; "thank Him for me, auntie, dear, for I've been nearly a murderer this night; I have indeed. Take me home, Aunt Joan, and I'll ask you and Heaven to forgive me."

"Poor child! she's overcome, and no wonder," said Joan, tenderly. "We'll go, dear, and Matthew'll be there before us, to say his thankful prayers along with us. Come along, darling, they'll take the Undercliff way."

They went slowly towards the town, and David Batley was borne gently along with them; and at the end of the little straggling streets they met Matthew. He was very white and weary-looking, and was supported by two men, but he smiled and told them he was none the worse, and they helped him into the house, and laid him on his bed. Annie would have ministered to him; she could have wept her heart out over him, but he kissed her hand and put her lovingly away. "Let Joan wait upon me," he said, "she's used to it; sit where I can see you, darling, that's all I want of you to-night."

So she sat down where the firelight fell upon her fair face and sunny hair, and mused with a sad heart over all that had passed that evening; her mind was made up—she would do her duty to the man who had been a father to her till this day, and David should help her to do it. She would tell him all, and he would go away and for-

get her, and she—no, she should never forget him, but she would strive to think of him as a friend, a brother,—anything which would not interfere with her wifely duties. She glanced at the pale, exhausted face of the man who loved her so truly, and vowed in her heart that she would never in word or deed do aught unbecoming to a good man's wife. And so the night wore on, and morning brought relief to all the anxious watchers.

Matthew was, as he said, only shaken and bruised; and the doctor called in to David Batley gave every hope of his speedy recovery, though he was seriously injured. Annie was very calm and quiet, going about her usual avocations with a serenity that astonished Matthew very much.

"Can I have made a mistake after all?" he asked himself. "But no; her words, her manner, all convince me of the truth; I was an old fool to think she could love me. I'll talk to her this very day."

It was evening before he could make up his mind or get an opportunity, and then his words seemed as though they would not come; it was so hard to dash away his own cup of happiness from his lips. He chose a moment when his sister went out for something to draw close to Annie and begin.

"I want to speak to you, dear."

"Well, Matthew."

He started at her words; it was not *Uncle* Matthew now, and she slid her hand into his as she had done on the cliff.

"I want to give you back your promise, Annie; I was wrong to talk to you of love. I didn't know—I thought"—

"Thought what?"

"That your heart was yours to give me, my child,—nay, never blush, it's no fault of yours—it was only an old man's mistake, that's all."

"I said what I meant when I promised to be your wife," she said, simply; "and I'll keep my word, Matthew. Can't you trust me?"

"Trust you!" he said, with a world of tenderness in his voice, "ay, with my life, but I want to make you happy, Annie, that's all."

"And so you will, I'm sure of it; and I'll do my best, if you'll put up with my ways, to be a good, true wife to you. You think I love David," she went on, her face flushing all over. "I saw it in your eyes last night upon the cliff; and so I do, but as a sister loves. Will you believe me when he wishes you joy himself, and tells you that Annie Marshall was his little sister always?"

"Will he do it?"

"Yes," she replied, unhesitatingly; she had faith enough in him to believe that he would help her to the sacrifice.

"Then God bless you, my own wife," Matthew said solemnly; and she went away to spend a weary night of watching and weeping, praying in wild fashion for help and comfort in her chosen path of duty. The next day she was able to see David, and talk to him; but it was too soon to tell him all that was in her heart, and many days slipped by ere she could do it. The time came at last, when, weak and wan, he was able to crawl out into the sunshine, and walk feebly about upon the beach. Then, in one quiet interview, Annie told him all—how Matthew loved her, how she wished to do her duty and be his wife, how her heart could never go with her hand; and she besought her young lover, with bitter tears, to help



her to do right. It was a sore trial to David Batley. At first, he was sorely tempted to curse her for her faithlessness, and leave her in her sorrow; but his better nature triumphed—he would not make her struggle greater than it was.

"I owe my life to him," he said. "But for him, I should have lain at the bottom of yonder sea. Why did he save me for this? I had better have died while I had the knowledge of your love."

"You have it, David, now and for ever; but you will not betray the knowledge to him who has befriended me all my life, and who wants to be a better friend still. You *will* help me, David?"

The promise was given at length, almost with a broken heart; and David Batley, with a calm face and steady voice, wished Matthew Pengelly joy of his fair young bride, and once more turned his back upon his home. He could not stay to see them married, though Matthew and Joan both begged him to do so; and he went to London to seek a ship, with a bitter wish in his heart that he might never come home any more. Annie went about as usual; though there were those who noticed that after the night on which the *Good Intent* was wrecked, she was graver and quieter than of yore—not so fond of singing as she worked, or of running about here, there, and everywhere, as was her wont before that catastrophe. Joan was well pleased at the change; she thought it was seemly that her brother's future wife should, as she said, "behave herself;" and she set about all sorts of preparations for the wedding, in which Annie assisted, if not with all her heart, at least with all her fingers. News came from David that he had got a ship, and was going away for twelve

months. He sent his best wishes to the bride, and a handsome shawl purchased at a fine London shop. Poor fellow! it was paid for with the money he had saved, as he thought, for his wedding; and the bride-expectant wept silent tears over it, as she put it away. Joan would have had her wear it on the occasion, but she would not hear of it. "She would wear the dress she had prepared," she said, "and no other;" so the handsome present lay hidden in the bottom of her box, a very skeleton among her simple trousseau. A bright, clear, spring sunshine shone upon her wedding-day, making the little flowers lift their bright heads in welcome, and filling the old folks' mouths with pleasant predictions.

"Happy is the bride that the sun shines on," says the proverb; and if Annie was not happy, she was calm and peaceful in the reflection of Matthew's radiant joy. The good people of Looe, one and all, remarked that he looked years younger since the dawn of his fulfilled hopes, and they foretold a pleasant life to the young creature who had given her future into his keeping. They walked to church, accompanied by hosts of friends, as is the custom in that primitive little place, and back again in the same simple style. There was open house to all who liked to come, and plenty of good cheer; and when evening came, Matthew took his bride away in a jingling post-chaise with two horses, a turn-out seldom attempted in the town, to Plymouth, the London of the west, to give her a two days' sight of the wonders to be seen there; and Jonathan Batley wrote a circumstantial history of all the grand doings to his son, which he received many a month after, and read with bitter pain gnawing at his heart, in a far-off land of

spices and myrtle and glowing sunshine, with the image of Annie's sunny hair ever floating between his eyes and the paper.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### SLEEPING THE LAST SLEEP.

"Let fate do her worst, there are relics of joy,  
Bright dreams of the past which she cannot destroy;  
Which come in the night-time of sorrow and care,  
And bring back the features that joy used to wear.  
Long, long be my heart with such memories filled!  
Like the vase in which roses have once been distilled;  
You may break, you may ruin, the vase if you will,  
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still."

MOORE.

SEVEN years passed swiftly over Annie's head, bringing many changes, making her a matronly, thoughtful woman, and leaving darkening shadows on her daily path. She had been a good, faithful wife to Matthew Penge'y, learning to love him as he deserved; and regarding David Batley, when he came and went, as a brother, to be loved always, but with no unwifely love. But Annie was alone now; the pretty home which the tender love of a good man had furnished with everything that could add to her comfort and happiness, was desolate; three names on a pretty tombstone in the little churchyard which overhung the sea, were all that was left to her of her wifely happiness. Joan had died soon after their marriage; then they had laid their only child in the same grave, with sorrow which the mother thought

could never be surpassed. Poor wife ! there was a deeper sorrow in store for her : for the past two years the stone had borne another name, and her cup of grief was full. Under the record of Joan's death and the baby's, came the words :—

Also to the Memory of  
MATTHEW PENGELLY,  
Lost at Sea, March 16th, 18—.  
"Not lost, but gone before."

Matthew had had a good chance offered him of going to sea, as part owner of a small vessel bound on a whaling expedition. She had been built under his own eye, and he saw a way to making money for Annie if he went ; and with many tears and misgivings, she consented to the separation. Alas ! her forebodings were only too real ; the end of the year that was to have brought him home brought only the dismal tidings of his loss ; the vessel had been wrecked, and two of her crew were missing, one of them being Matthew Pengelly. It was a terrible trial to the young wife, but she bore it bravely and well, setting her worldly affairs in order, and striving to act in all things as would have pleased him, had he been there to see her. She had enough to live on in her simple way, but she employed her time in needlework, for Joan had taught her well in the old days ; and there was not such a skilful hand for miles around as "Young Widow Pengelly," as she came to be called by the neighbours. She might have married over and over again ; her pretty face and independent position won for her many suitors, but she turned from them all with aversion and disgust. There were none among them to be compared to him—the dead husband of her youth—so good, so tender, and so true. David Batley had never

spoken of love to her since the time, so long ago, when both their hearts had well-nigh broken over the sacrifice of their love to her sense of duty. He was unmarried, and, people said, fast getting rich, but he seemed to have no heart for any of the girls, who were quite ready to accept him, whenever he should offer himself to them. More new bonnets and smart dresses were donned in his honour, when he came home from his long voyages, than in his simplicity he ever dreamed of. He went his way among them, fancy free to all appearances, doing a loving son's duty to his old father and mother, till the latter faded away into her quiet grave, her last spoken words a blessing on his dutiful head. Then their home grew very lonely, and his heart turned once more to her who had never lost her place in it. He had never ceased to love her deeply and truly; his heart was as much hers now as it had ever been, when he strolled by her side in the bright sunshine, and built fairy castles in the air to be dwelt in some time in the glowing future. But would she have him now? Would she turn from him again, after his long years of probation and patient weary waiting? He scarcely dared to hope it, and yet he resolved to "put his fate to the touch, and win or lose it all." He would ask her the first fitting opportunity, and the opportunity came sooner than he dared to hope. It was a bright summer day; the air was redolent of the breath of sweet flowers, and the clear blue sea broke in light waves upon the beach, flecking the shingle with diamond sparkles. David Batley strolled up to the old churchyard, which lies on the top of a hill overlooking the sea, where the dead lie in their quiet graves, with the mighty ocean, where so many of them have met their death,



plashing and heaving at their feet. Many a story of wreck and disaster do the stones of that old churchyard tell, and the young man sighed over many a name he had known in life, as he passed to his mother's grave. It was not far from the place where Matthew Pengelly's name was inscribed below his sister's and his child's. Annie's loving hands had made a garden of the little plot, and it was bright with summer flowers. She was kneeling by it now, training a creeper so that it should be a framework for the names she loved, and he stood and watched her for some moments unobserved. When she looked up it was to meet his earnest eyes gazing at her with the old look she so well remembered, and to have her hands taken in both his.

"Annie," he said, "let me speak to you."

She divined what he would say, and drew back from the grave.

"Not here," she said; "not in sight of that stone, David. Come away."

"And why not here, Annie? He loved me as a lad, and I loved him. I think if he could look down upon us now he would give you to me. You know what I would say to you; my heart has never changed, and I have waited as Jacob waited for Rachel, seven long, weary years. Don't send me away to sea again with no hope, save that I may die in the dark waters as I have seen others die."

"Don't talk like that, David; we have all something to live for."

"I only live for you. Have pity on me, and think what my lonely life has been. Say you have not forgotten the old love quite—that you will give me some little hope."

"I cannot," she said, shuddering. "I have never forgotten our love, David; but we were boy and girl then, and since that time I have been a good man's happy, honoured wife. I feel as if I were wronging even his memory in even thinking of another."

"You *do* love me! I know you do. These are idle fancies, dear Annie. Could poor Matthew see you now, he would be glad you had a true heart to protect you. You have seen how patient I have been, and, with Heaven's help, I will show you how loving I can be. Don't say me nay, or I swear that I will never set foot in my home again, or strive to"——

"Hush, David! Don't talk so wildly. Let me have till to-morrow to think—to pray that I may do what is right. I do love you—hush! don't speak yet; but 'mid all my thoughts of you his voice seems to sound in my ear, his face to rise ever before me, and bid me pause and reflect."

"You're too much alone, darling, that's it. *Do* think of it. What, you won't kiss me! Well, well, I'll live and hope. Go home, my own Annie,—my wife that will be yet, I trust."

Annie did go home, and think, and pray, and two days from that time saw her the promised wife of David Batley. All the town sympathised with the joy of the bridegroom, and the bride was envied by half the women in the place. A speedy union theirs was to be. David had waited too long for his happiness to be patient any longer, and it mattered little to Annie when once her word was given. Before the autumn was over they were married in the little church where she had plighted her troth to Matthew, and seldom had the quiet place seen so gay a wedding. When the bride

and bridegroom had gone home, and the crowd dispersed, an old, weather-beaten sailor rose from a tombstone where he had been sitting gazing on what was going on, and addressed a woman who was sauntering slowly away.

"I say, Missis!"

"Well!"

"Is there ere a Missis Pengelly lives here?"

The woman stared at him with a blank face.

"Mrs Pengelly!" she repeated.

"Ay, wife of one Matthew Pengelly, as went to sea long since, and never come back."

"What do you mean?" she said, clutching him by the arm, and staring straight into his face. "You're not he, are you?"

"No, I'm his mate; though he's a'most such another old scarecrow as I am. He bid me come here, and look at the tombstones, and see if his wife was dead. I can't find her name."

"Better she were—better she were! Did you see yonder handsome bride and joyous bridegroom?"

"Ay."

"The woman was Annie Pengelly; the man, the lad David Batley, that he saved from death long ago. She thought him dead. Look here."

She led him to the tomb which recorded the loss of Matthew Pengelly, and showed him the name.

"She's mourned him long and true," she said; "and David Batley's loved her through it all; and what'll come of it now?"

"Misery for all," the old man said. "Matthew Pengelly's on his way here from Penzance in a trawler; I'm to meet him at Downterry yonder, for his heart failed him at the thought of coming home and finding her dead. But it's worse—it's worse!"

'Don't take on; there's comfort yet, may be.'

"Comfort! Ay, pretty comfort to a man who's been a slave to savages, and endured hunger, thirst, and privation of all sorts, with one hope in his heart to buoy him up; it's a comfort to him to come home and find his wife married to another, isn't it? I love Matthew Pengelly as though he were my own brother, and I'd rather jump into the deep sea yonder than carry this news to him."

The woman went her way into the town, and the sailor walked slowly away towards Donderry. She did not go straight to Annie and tell her, but she hinted of something terrible about to happen, and her gossips talked, and ere long Matthew's name was in every mouth, though the majority of the talkers scarce knew why. To David Batley and his bride it came at length, scaring away the sunshine of their wedding day, and filling their hearts with sickening terror. They found the woman who had talked with the old sailor, and from her they extracted the truth.

"You had better go away," she urged in her fright. "There'll be murder maybe if he finds you here."

"David will go," Annie said with white lips. "There has been no wrong done, but it is best he should. He will leave me, and I,—I will go to Donderry to meet my husband."

They tried to dissuade her, but she was firm, and David let her go. She put off her bridal attire and went away unattended, though the sky was lowering by this time and the waves had begun to dash and moan upon the beach as they had done on the night when the coastguardsman had asked her to be his wife. That evening was ever present to her thoughts now as she walked along

with her head bent against the wind,—*he* was coming back, and the old life would begin once more. Her heart was full of mingled joy and sorrow, joy for him, sorrow for the suffering loving heart she had left behind. She found the old sailor without any difficulty; he was wandering about in a purposeless fashion; and making herself known to him, she heard all he had to tell of Matthew's long sojourn among the Esquimaux, who had rescued him from death, and of his fear lest he might find some disaster had happened to his home. She wept bitter tears over the sad tale, but there was joy mixed with it at the thought of how she would atone to him for all, and she waited with terrible impatience the coming of the vessel which was to bring him back. "They can't be longer than to-night," the old man said. "I've travelled up from Penzance, and they should have been here as soon as me. This wind's in their favour, though it's a bit too strong to be good for 'em just now."

It rose to a gale ere the night was over, and Annie's heart grew sick as she sat in the station-house window watching the boiling waves below her. None of them could persuade her to take any rest; her aching heart would not let her. The morning dawned clear and bright, but no tidings of the little vessel; and she returned to Looe with strange forebodings filling her breast. David had shut himself up, and would see no one; and she went about her little home wondering whether it were not all some dreadful dream from which she should presently awake. So passed that day and the next, and on the evening of the second a fisherman stumbled over the body of a man lying face downwards on the sand about a mile



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from the town. She gave the alarm, and soon the rumour went round that a corpse had been washed ashore. It was too common an occurrence to cause very much excitement; but Annie, with a wild fear choking at her heart, rushed madly to the little beach. The men did not recognise the careworn face, with its long beard and silver hair, but she did, and with a long wild cry she threw herself upon the cold form. Yes, it was Matthew Pengelly; dead upon the very spot where he had lain exhausted after saving David Batley's life; the roar of the storm had been his only welcome to the home he left so happy; the cold clasp of the booming waves the only embrace for him on this side of eternity. There is but little more to tell of this true, but simple, history; nothing was ever heard of the trawler or her crew; she had foundered in the storm, and gone to the bottom with all on board save him who had floated home to be buried among his own kin. Annie mourned him afresh with a grief that would not be comforted, and David Batley went away with a stricken heart to sea once more. There came a time, however, when his patience won the treasure he coveted, and ere he laid his father's head in the grave the old man blessed Annie Pengelly as a daughter, and prayed that the love and duty she had shown in this world might be rewarded in that which is to come

FRANCES ACTON.

## Beauty and the Beast.

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MARSHAL MONT-JEAN was as respectable a soldier as good King Francis had in his army. It was currently reported in his troop that he had once been young, although his hair was now gray; and that he had once been alert, although the wounds from sword, lance, and bullet, which cicatrised his body all over, had rendered him fit only for garrison duty. He was intrusted with an important fortress on the frontiers of Piedmont, for his royal master knew that his stiff and shrivelled body would as little think of budging from before an enemy as the stone and lime he was set to guard. Marshal Mont-Jean had a young wife, a lineal descendant of the noble family of Chateaubriant, a girl in her seventeenth year, of a clear, carnated complexion, through which the eloquent blood shone forth at every word she spoke, with dark eyes, at once penetrating and winning, and with an elastic, buoyant, coquettish sort of a gait. Owing to family politics, she had been married to the marshal before she very well knew what marriage was. Naturally of an affectionate disposition, she endeavoured to love the tough old soldier—who, imperative and stern to all others, was gentle to her—as

a daughter might have done. Her little thoughts ran more upon her gowns, headtires, and feathers, than anything else. She would have had no objections, had it lain in her power, to have displayed these objects of her affections before the eyes of young French gallants, but unluckily there was none such within reach. The soldiers of the garrison were old and grizzled as their commander or the walls they tenanted. The Marquis of Saluzzo visited the marshal sometimes, to be sure, but, although not exactly old, he was ugly. His features were irregular, his eyes dull and bleared, his complexion a yellowish black: he had a big belly and a round back, and was heavy and lumpish in all his motions. So the pretty lady had no one to please by her dresses but herself, her handmaidens, and her venerable husband; and yet she was daily dressed like the first princess of the land. It had been a fair sight to see the delicate girl attired like unto some stately queen, and striving to give her *petite* figure, mincing steps, and laughing looks an air of solemn and stately reverie.

Everything has an end: at least the life of Marshal Mont-Jean had. His little widow was sincerely sorry, but her grief was not exactly heart-breaking. She had respected him, but love was out of the question; and with all her esteem for the man and resignation to her fate, there was something unnatural in the union of persons so widely differing in age. But had she been ever so inclined to lament him, she would not have had time. She was under the necessity of transporting herself immediately, with all her own and her late husband's retainers, to her estates in France; and she had not a single sol left in her possession. Her estates were large; but even had there been time

to await the arrival of money from them, the times were too unsafe to hazard its transmission. The country around her was too mountainous, and its air too pure and keen, to nourish usurers. Her dresses were of immense value; but there was no one near who cared for such frippery, or could or would advance money upon its pledge. The little lady was at her wits' end.

She felt no great alleviation of her troubles when one day—after wondering for a quarter of an hour what was the meaning of the *tantara* of trumpets before the gates, and the clattering of horses' hoofs in the court-yard—the Marquis of Saluzzo was ushered into her presence. He was gaily apparelled in a tunic and hose of white silk, laced with silver, and a hat of the same materials, with bushy white plumes waving over his head. This costume communicated to his countenance—which rivalled in colour the feet of a duck that has all day been wading in the mud—a yet more repulsive expression. The young widow thought—when she saw the portly belly come swaggering into the hall before its owner, and the worshipful marquis panting after it, with a multitude of ungainly bows—that she had never seen anything half so hideous.

Her visitor came at once to the point, for he was none of those who are troubled with a fastidious delicacy. He had learned the situation of embarrassment in which the marshal had left his lady, and came to inform her that he was himself on the road to Paris, whither, if she would favour him with her company, and join her train of attendants to his, he would defray her expenses. He urged her acceptance of proffered aid with a garrulous and indelicate importunity, fixing his gooseberry eyes upon her, with an attempt to look

languishing. Nay, in the pride of his heart, he let her know that already many suitors were mustering to urge their claims to the hand of the wealthy widow of Mont-Jean, the heiress-apparent of the noble house of Chateaubriant; and that he was not without hopes of insinuating himself into her good graces during their journey. In our days, it would be thought indelicate for a woman in the lady's situation to accept an essential service from so blunt a knight; but, in those days, the fair sex were not so particular. There was danger even then of being inveigled; but Marie was young, light-hearted, and undaunted, and fond of a joke. She knew not enough of the world to be aware of the use an artful man might take of such a journey to render appearances against her, should she finally repulse his advances. Lastly, there was no choice left her: the new commandant was daily expected, and she could not raise a *maravedi*.

The marquis and his fair companion were, by their style of travelling and the want of other company, kept close together during a great part of their journey. He was constantly by her bridle on the road; he was ready with the proffer of his services whenever she dismounted; he sat by her at the board, most frequently spread under the shadow of some branchy tree. Marie gradually got reconciled to his appearance; and although she could not respect a man, who, in his incessant prattling, gave token only of a proud, foolish, and selfish mind, she learned to take pleasure in the unconscious manner in which he displayed his character. His attempts to express his love, too, were endless and ludicrous; and Marie was not the person to shrink from a little coquetry, more particularly when the offer afforded her at the same



time matter for a hearty laugh. She had a natural talent for coquetting, and the restraint laid upon her of late by her situation only heightened her desire to exercise it now.

Before the party reached Lyons, however, she was made painfully sensible of her error. She remarked that the marquis took care to blazon immediately to the whole train every encouragement she gave him. In private he assumed a dictatorial tone, arranging who of her domestics it were most advisable to retain or dismiss—assuming that their future union was an event which must undoubtedly happen. His attendants affected to look upon her with a peculiarly intelligent expression, and used every artifice to draw from her speeches which might favour their master's hopes.

"Ah, senora," said the steward, one day, as she was rallying him about some trifle, "these sharp words require a sweetener."

"Depend upon it, good Jacques," she replied, "you shall have as heavy a gold chain as the steward of the best Marquis in the land the day of my marriage."

She could have bit her tongue for vexation when she saw the old thief scuttle up to his master and tell him the story, with a profusion of nods, becks, and wreathed smiles.

She learned, about the same time from her female attendants, that they had been prevented from forwarding any intelligence to their friends in France; that her own messengers had been detained, and despatches addressed to her intercepted. She saw now that the wily Italian was closing his meshes around her. She had looked upon him as a fool, a creature out of whom she could extract amusement and advantage, and

shake him off as lightly as the flower the refreshing dewdrop when the western breeze begins to blow. She found that the lowest order of mind possesses most practical cunning. She was fretted and anxious. His train outnumbered hers, which consisted, moreover, chiefly of female attendants. She was, however, of too gay and confident a disposition to remain long uneasy. They were now approaching Lyons, and in the city he would not dare to detain her person by force. Her few men-at-arms were hardy soldiers, and implicitly to be relied upon.

Arrived in the *hostelrie*, she made an excuse for retiring early. The window of her apartment opened upon the Rhone. She sat, her head buried in her hands, striving, but in vain, to determine upon some line of conduct. The door opened, and her favourite tirewoman introduced a young gentleman, richly, but not gaudily equipped, of martial bearing.

"As messenger, my lady, from your cousin, Vieilleville."

The messenger bore a letter, in which the *Sieur de Vieilleville* informed her that it was currently reported in Paris she had promised her hand to the Marquis of Saluzzo, and that the king, for political considerations, was intent upon the match; that he, however, could not for a moment believe her so inconsiderate, and that he was at hand with a body of sixty *gens-d'armes* to free her.

The lady recognised at once the rude craft of Saluzzo in the reports to which her cousin alluded. She trembled at the thought of the king seconding the wishes of her unknightly suitor; but she rejoiced that the full extent of her danger had only been laid open to her at the moment that

certain aid presented itself. Vieilleville was one of those straightforward, daring persons, who, having neither fear nor dishonesty in their character, always pursue the direct road to their object. It was well-known that he had often opposed the king in his darling projects, yet without losing his favour; for Francis knew that thoughts of self never stained Vieilleville. The proudest nobles of France, the princes of the blood, did not disdain to seek his countenance and protection, although he was yet but a lieutenant of gendarmerie, and a simple knight—not even a member of the order.

With tumultuous joy Marie addressed to her cousin a warm letter of thanks for his confidence in the propriety of her conduct. Love for a man of Saluzzo's character was out of the question. As for the king's deep-laid schemes, she had been sacrificed when a child to political considerations; but now, a woman and her own mistress, she would submit to such treatment from no one. She threw herself unreservedly upon her cousin's protection. As, however, the marquis and she were next day to cross the hills to Rouanne, there to embark on the Loire, and sail down to Briare, whence they were to proceed by land through Essonne to Paris, she ventured to suggest what seemed the quietest mode of getting her out of the marquis's hands. She proposed that Vieilleville should advance with his troop to Corbiel, taking care to arrive the same evening that she reached Essonne. Next day he was to direct his course towards Juvizy, and entering in at the same time, her steward should so arrange matters that her attendants could in a moment separate themselves from the *cortège* of the marquis, and attach themselves to that of Vieilleville. With such a knight

opposed to him, and in the broad eye of day, Saluzzo would yield without resistance.

Marie, as she next day rode across the mountains, was wild with joy. The fresh breezes of the uplands, and the rapturous thought of approaching freedom, filled her with transport. She teased her steed to perform a thousand gambols; she sung in emulation of the birds by the way-side; she squandered a thousand malicious kind looks upon the lout by her side; she had a good word and a gift for every menial in the train. Her delicate figure, flashing eyes, and graceful wildness, kept all eyes fixed upon her with love and wonder.

Next day the party embarked upon the Loire, but the first intoxication of joy was over. The equable motion of the boat, the gentle rippling of the waves, the heat of the day, the deep shades beneath which they occasionally passed, relaxed her frame. A band of music, which the marquis had engaged at Lyons, aided by its soft plaintive melodies to give a melancholy character to her reflections. She thought of her indiscretion, of the toils from which she was not yet free, of the slanders and calumnies to which she might be exposed. The careless innocence of a young woman may lead her into conduct, to look upon which impresses her with a tormenting consciousness of sullied purity, although not one criminal thought has ruffled her white mind. It was thus with Marie. Lost in self-reproach, she bowed her head over the gunwale of the boat, and played in the water with her fingers, while a big tear gathered beneath each jetty eyelash. Her ugly companion sat beside her, gazing upon the fair mourner with a nauseous expression of affection and confidence. The change of her mood since yesterday was too palpable to

escape even his gross apprehension. But he attributed it with great complacency to the waywardness of love, believing himself to be the object. His attachment to Marie was a strange mixture of avarice, gratified vanity, and admiration of her beauty.

Let us hasten to the close of our story. It was mid-day, and the crowds which had thronged the market-place of Juvizy were dispersing, when a knight, armed at all points, his vizor up, rode into the great square, followed by eighty men-at-arms. He sat on his strong black horse like an upright pillar of iron. His look was sedate, but frank and careless, as of one whose blood flowed as calmly, and whose thoughts were as clear, amid the thunder of the fight as in the retirement of his own chamber. There was a universal expression of love and reverence, for every peasant knew Vieilleville. His troop drew up in a wide street which abutted on the market-place, at one end of the town-house.

They had not waited many minutes when the sound of approaching horses was heard, and soon after a large company, in which were a number of females—the men, though more numerous, neither so well equipped nor skilfully managed, as those of Vieilleville—entered the square. A knight and a lady rode foremost. The eyes of the latter glanced bright as they fell upon Vieilleville and his attendants. They advanced towards the town-house, the greater proportion of their followers edging off towards a street at the other end of a building from that occupied by Vieilleville. The women and a few soldiers turned their horses towards the troop which had arrived before them. Saluzzo, (for it was he,) espying this, called after them that they had mistaken their way.



"With your pardon, fair sir," said Marie, checking her steed, "they are quite right. Your lodgings are at the *hostelrie* of the Bear, mine at that of St Denis. My cousin Vieilleville is here to relieve you of the charge I have so unwillingly imposed upon you; and you know how indecorous it would be to prefer the protection of a stranger to so near a relation. My steward will reckon with yours at Paris for any expense you may have incurred on my account. The debt of gratitude I owe you I never can hope to pay."

And here the innate devil of coquetry resumed its sway as her spirits rose.

"I leave my heart in your keeping, fair sir. Take good care of it."

Saluzzo was too well aware of his own powers to dream of coping with Vieilleville. He saw his fairy visions melting away, and he wept for spite and sorrow. With a cowed look he took her proffered hand and pressed it to his lips. In the very wantonness of malice, she gently pressed his hand, smiled, and cast one of her most winning glances at him; then, turning suddenly, as if to hide a blush, she cantered smilingly towards her cousin. The crestfallen marquis retired in a supereminently savage mood to his den.

On reaching the *hostelrie*, Vieilleville presented to Marie a young knight, whom she recognised as the bearer of his litter.

"The Prince of Roche-sur-Yonne, fair cousin; the playmate of your childhood, the admirer of your womanly beauties, and one who, as you well know, lately undertook a service of some danger and difficulty for your sake."

The prince was certainly an amiable and handsome young man; his late service gave him some

claim to a kind reception ; and, in the course of a few hours' conversation, so many childish hours of happiness had been reawakened in Marie's memory, that she felt as if her youthful playmate and she, although separated, had never been disjoined. She persuaded herself that some invisible bond had held them together, although herself had remained unaware of it until circumstances drew the noose tighter. The prince secured his footing by a thousand delicate and unpretending attentions. On the eve of the third day, just before they entered Paris, Vieilleville reminded his cousin of the danger she incurred from the king's anxiety to see her married to Saluzzo, and urged a speedy private marriage with the prince. Marie saw the propriety of the advice ; her own inclinations were not adverse ; the good marshal dwelt in her memory rather as a revered parent than as a beloved husband. In short, she consented.

This arrangement was kept, of course, a profound secret from Saluzzo. On recovering from his dumps, the malicious pressure of his hand, and the rosy smile which accompanied it, broke like morning on his memory. It is strange what a power of self-deception the mind possesses. When a lover has long wished to gain his mistress's affections, picturing to himself the possible awakening of love in her breast, and all the scenes of his future happiness, the images of his fancy grow so vivid, that he cannot persuade himself that they are unreal. The slightest indication is eagerly caught at as a proof of their reality. A thousand proofs of dislike are effaced from recollection by one kind look. This holds true even with such questionable passions as that of Saluzzo. He paid a daily visit to Marie Mont Jean, still trusting

that, although one visit afforded no room for hope, the next night. In vain; the Prince of Rochesur-Yonne was always there before him, managed to remain longer, and engrossed all the conversation and kind looks of the lady.

At last Saluzzo resolved to change his tactics. He summoned the lady before the Parliament, to be adjudged to implement a promise of marriage, which he alleged she had made to him during their journey. Vieilleville, the prince, and Marie, held a council of war, and it was agreed that their measures should be directed by the first mentioned.

The president and counsellors were assembled in full chamber, after receiving a brief but pithy hint from the king to take care how they crossed his wishes. The clerk of the court was mending his pen with the most assiduous gravity. Saluzzo approached the bar, attended by a lean, sallow notary, and some creatures of the court. At the same moment, Marie de Montesfiedon, relict of the late Marshal Mont-Jean, entered the hall, leaning on the arm of the redoubted Monsieur de Vieilleville, attended by a gallant train of ladies, lords, and gentlemen.

The preliminary forms having been observed, the president directed the lady to take the oath of verity with bared and uplifted hands. The first interrogatory put to her was—

“Did you ever promise marriage to the noble gentleman, the Marquis of Saluzzo, now in presence?”

The blood rushed into the cheeks of the lady; she turned her eyes resolutely upon the marquis, who looked upon the ground, his colour growing blacker and yet more bloodless. She replied in a

low whisper, which was heard through the whole hall—

“No, by the virtue of mine oath.”

The president opened his mouth as if to put another question, and the clerk sharpened his ears, and brought his pen in contact with the paper; but the lady interrupted them, her face growing crimson, in hurried but distinct words—

“Gentlemen, I am not accustomed to such exhibitions. I fear my woman’s wit may be entangled amid your forms and subtleties. I will cut this matter short. Before this noble company, I declare, as I shall answer to King Francis with my broad lands, and to God with my soul, as I live and regard my honour, I never gave troth, nor faith, nor promise of marriage, to that lying caitiff, nor ever dreamed of such a folly. And if any one call in question this declaration here,” she continued, taking Vieilleville by the hand, “here stands my champion, whom I present to maintain my words, which he knows to be true, and from the mouth of a lady of honour, if ever one existed. I place my trust under God, and my good cause in his valour.”

“That alters the case,” said the president, smiling with secret satisfaction at being freed from the necessity of displeasing the king. “Clerk, you may remove your books; there is no more need of writing. The lady has preferred a form of process much more summary than ours. And you, Sir Marquis, what is your pleasure?”

Saluzzo had too sincere a respect for his ungainly body to hazard it against Vieilleville.

“I will marry no woman by constraint,” he muttered. “If she do not affect me, I can do without her.”



As Vieilleville passed through the antechamber, one of the judges accosted him in a low voice: "You have saved yourself a six months' work, worse than the *corvée*, by this wager of battle. The marquis had a list of forty interrogations for the lady, in which every word she ever spoke to himself or servants, every pressure of his hand, was enumerated."

"Well," said he, "it is only a French woman who has outwitted a hundred Italians."

"No," pursued his informant, "it is your valour which has extricated her from an ugly scrape. Away, and celebrate the wedding, for I much misinterpret the looks of the prince and lady if that be not what you are driving at."



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BALLANTYNE, ROBERTS, AND COMPANY, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.

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